NATION

Fake 'West Arctica' embassy busted; 1 held

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

ED files FEMA case against Myntra for ₹1.6K cr breach

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Sindhu downs Miyazaki, Satwik-Chirag advance at China Open

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 24 JULY 2025 | THURSDAY | BENGALURU | 28 MUHARRAM, 1447 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 200 | Pages: 8

CM says K'taka tops per capita income in India

BENGALURU, 23 JULY

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday announced that State has achieved the highest per capita income in India, citing the Union Finance Ministry data and attributed this accomplishment to the positive impact of his government's guarantee schemes. "According to Union Finance Ministry data, Karnataka's per capita NSDP (Net State Domestic Product) stands at Rs 2,04,605 — the highest in the country," he said. "This achievement reflects not only Karnataka's economic strength but also the impact of our Guarantee Schemes." Noting that State's per capita income was Rs 1,05,697 in 2014-15, the CM said it has now increased by 93.6 per cent in 10 years. "The credit for this achievement goes to the guarantee schemes. By directly providing Rs 4-5 thousand per month, Rs 60-70 thousand per year to every family in the State, we are making every family financially self-reliant." General Secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala also credited the guarantee schemes for the success. "These are clear indicators that Karnataka is not only becoming economically stronger but is also achieving social justice and equity," he said in a statement.

—Salar News with Agencies

STATE CASTE CENSUS TO BEGIN FROM 22 SEPT

Will serve as a model for the country: CM

BENGALURU, 23 JULY

The Karnataka government will conduct a new 'Social and Educational survey', popularly known as "caste census", in the State for 15 days, from 22 September to 7 October, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said on Wednesday.

The State Backward Classes Commission is tasked with submitting the report by the end of October, which will shape the State's next budget.

A preliminary meeting on the social and educational survey was held on Wednesday under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

"The Backward Classes Commission has submitted a proposal to the government to conduct a social and educational survey. Accordingly, a survey of all 7 crore people in the State will be conducted. The main objective of the census is to eliminate caste discrimination," the CM said in a statement.

The survey also aims to gather comprehensive data on the financial status and land ownership.

"This time, the survey should be a model survey in the country," Siddaramaiah said. "The survey report should be submitted by the end of October. Instructions have been given to start preliminary preparations for the survey, including training from now itself".

On 12 June, the State cabinet had decided to conduct a fresh social and educational survey (caste census), effectively binning the one done in 2015 at a cost of about Rs 165 crore. The decision also follows directives from the top brass of Congress -- President Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi.

Siddaramaiah emphasised that precautions would be taken to avoid any complaints about the survey and ensured that no one is left out of the exercise.

"The Kantharaju Commission had previously conducted the survey manually by preparing 54 questions. This time, more elements will be included in the survey and the survey will be conducted using a mobile app," he said.

Pointing out that human resources, including 1.65 lakh enumerators, are required for the survey work, Siddaramaiah said, along with the services of teachers, staff from other departments will also be used for the fresh survey.

—PTI

Survey will gather data on financial status and land ownership *PHOTO: X*

State withdraws GST notices for UPI transactions older than 2-3yrs

The State government announced that GST notices based on UPI transactions won't be issued for case over 2-3 years. The announcement came after Chief Minister Siddaramaiah met trade unions, following which the trade bodies called of their proposed 25 July agitation. Many street traders received notices exceeding Rs 40 lakh, with one a vegetable trader in Haveri named Shankar Gowda Hadimani getting a Rs 29 lakh notice. *>>>MORE ON PAGE 2*

Parliament adjourned over protests on Bihar SIR

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

Parliamentary proceedings were virtually washed out for a third consecutive day on Wednesday as Opposition members led vociferous protests in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, demanding a discussion on the revision of the electoral rolls in Bihar ahead of the Assembly polls.

Waving placards and raising slogans, Opposition members repeatedly stormed into the Wells of both Houses, leading to an adjournment of the proceedings for the day in the post-lunch session.

Upset over the repeated disruptions, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said members are bringing street-like behaviour to Parliament and requested them to introspect on their role as lawmakers.

The Lok Sabha was first adjourned till noon minutes into the Question Hour, when Giridhari Yadav, a member of the Janata Dal (United), a key constituent of the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA), sought to put the government on the spot by questioning the development of the rail network in Bihar.

The Rajya Sabha also saw repeated disruptions.

Opposition MPs raised slogans against the SIR exercise and also demanded that Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge be allowed to speak.

—PTI

Opposition members protest outside the Parliament, demanding discussion on the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in poll-bound Bihar, during the Monsoon session, in New Delhi, Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

EC BEGINS PREPARATIONS TO HOLD VICE PRESIDENTIAL POLLS

The Election Commission on Wednesday said it has begun the process of holding the Vice Presidential election, two days after Jagdeep Dhankhar's surprise resignation from the post. The poll authority said it has started constituting the electoral college comprising MPs of both Houses of Parliament. Both elected and nominated members are eligible to vote in the election. The effective strength of both the Houses together is 786 and the winning candidate will require 394 votes. *>>>MORE ON PAGE 3*

NATIONAL SPORTS GOVERNANCE BILL TABLED IN PARLIAMENT

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya introduced the National Sports Governance Bill in Lok Sabha. Mandaviya said the Bill has provisions for a National Sports Board (NSB) to create a stringent system of accountability. All National Sports Federations will have to attain NSB's recognition for access to Central funding. The Bill also proposes a National Sports Tribunal, which will have the powers of a civil court and decide disputes ranging from selection to election. *>>>MORE ON PAGES 3, 5*

India extends Pakistan airspace closure to 24 Aug

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

India has extended its airspace ban on Pakistani aircraft until 24 August 2025, following the 22 April terror attack in Pahalgam that killed 26 people. The restriction, effective from 30 April, applies to all aircraft operated, owned or leased by Pakistan, including military flights. Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol confirmed the extension on X. The latest Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) is valid until 24 August. The ban was previously extended from its original end date of 24 May, then to 24 June and 24 July. In a reciprocal move, Pakistan has also prolonged its airspace restriction for India until 24 August. *—PTI*

Indian student assaulted in racist attack in Australia

ADELAIDE, 23 JULY

A 23-year-old Indian student, Charanpreet Singh, was assaulted and left unconscious on a street in Adelaide after a group of men allegedly hurled racist abuse and attacked him over a car parking dispute. Singh was allegedly told "f*** off, Indian" before being punched repeatedly and left to die on the roadside, 9News reported. The incident took place on Saturday night (local time) near Kintore Avenue in the heart of the city. "They just said 'f*** off, Indian', and after that they just started punching," 9News quoted him as saying. "I tried to fight back, but they beat me until I was unconscious." *>>>More on Page 6*

Explosives found at Kalasipalya bus stand

BENGALURU, 23 JULY

Six gelatin sticks and detonators were discovered in a carry bag outside a toilet in Kalasipalya BMTC bus stand in City on Wednesday, police said.

A bomb disposal squad and dog squad were immediately dispatched to the spot, as soon as the police received the information, they said.

The entire area was immediately cordoned off and a thorough search of the premises was conducted before police seized the recovered materials for further examination.

"Six Gelatin sticks and some detonators (both separately) were found in a carry bag outside the toilet in Kalasipalya BMTC bus stand," S Girish, Deputy Commissioner of Police (West), told media.

"After receiving the alert, Police arrived at the spot and conducted a thorough inspection of the abandoned bag and confirmed the presence of explosives in it. Since Kalasipalya bus stand is a highly crowded public place, it is believed that the suspect(s) placed the explosive materials with the malicious intent of causing harm to public life and property," the FIR stated.

—PTI

Trump: India & Pak were going the nuke route

WASHINGTON, 23 JULY

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday again claimed credit for stopping a war between India and Pakistan, saying both countries were "going to end up in nuclear war" after the Pahalgam terror attack.

"We stopped wars between India and Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda," he said at a reception in the White House with the Congress members.

"(Pakistan) shot down five planes and it was back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. I called them and said, 'Listen, no more trade. If you do this, you're not going to be good…They're both powerful nuclear nations and that would have happened, and who knows where that would have ended up. And I stopped it'," he added.

Trump has made similar claims at least 25 times since 10 May. On Friday, he said for the first time that five jets were downed, something the Indian government has neither confirmed nor denied so far.

India, however, consistently denied any third-party involvement in mediating the ceasefire. *—PTI/ANI*

>>>>More on Page 3

SC to hear cash discovery row, but CJI to sit out

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said it would constitute a bench to hear Allahabad High Court Judge Justice Yashwant Varma's plea seeking to invalidate a report by an in-house inquiry panel, which found him guilty of misconduct in the cash discovery row. However, Chief Justice (CJI) BR Gavai said it would be improper of him to preside over the matter and directed that another bench be formed to hear the matter.

The matter was mentioned for urgent listing before a bench comprising Chief Justice Gavai and Justices K Vinod Chandran and Joymalya Bagchi.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, who mentioned the matter for Justice Varma, said the plea was in respect of recommendation made by the then CJI Sanjiv Khanna. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Modi, Starmer to ink India-US FTA on whiskey, textile

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has embarked on a four-day visit to the United Kingdom and the Maldives, with a major highlight being the signing of a long-awaited India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on Thursday in London. The agreement, under negotiation for three years, aims to double bilateral trade to USD 120 billion by 2030.

To be signed in the presence of PM Modi and UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement will eliminate tariffs on 99 per cent of Indian exports and significantly reduce duties on 90 per cent of British goods, including whisky, cars, aerospace components, and medical devices.

The deal will open UK markets to Indian sectors such as textiles, leather, gems and jewellery, and also facilitate easier mobility for professionals. A social security pact will prevent double contributions for Indian professionals working temporarily in the UK.

Modi will then travel to the Maldives (25–26 July) to celebrate its Independence Day and strengthen cooperation under India's Neighbourhood First Policy. *—PTI*

REPAIRING TIES

After 5 years, India resumes tourist visas to Chinese citizens

BEIJING, 23 JULY

India has resumed issuance of tourist visas to Chinese nationals from this week, a move that comes as part of efforts to repair bilateral ties that came under severe strain following the military clashes in Galwan Valley. India had suspended issuance of tourist visas to Chinese nationals in 2020 largely due to Covid-19 pandemic but the restrictions continued in view of the eastern Ladakh border row.

The Indian embassy in Beijing said Chinese nationals may apply for tourist visas from Thursday.

In a notification, it also explained the required procedures to apply for the visas as well as documents required to be submitted at respective Indian visa application centres in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The decision by the Indian embassy to resume the tourist visas came nearly a week-and-half after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held extensive talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Beijing.

In the last few months, India and China have initiated a number of measures to repair the bilateral ties that had severely nosedived following the deadly clashes between the two militaries in June 2020.

The efforts to normalise the relations were initiated after the Indian and Chinese militaries ended their face-off along the Line of Actual Control in October last year.

In his opening remarks at the meeting with Wang, Jaishankar said the bilateral relationship requires both sides taking a "far-seeing approach". *—PTI*

UK AI crash victim's family given 'wrong body': Report

LONDON/NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

The family of a British national, who died in the Ahmedabad Air India plane crash, allegedly received the wrong body, the DailyMail has reported. In another instance, the bodies of two victims were sent in one coffin, the report said.

James Healy-Pratt, a lawyer representing the bereaved British families, told the DailyMail, "I have been sitting down in the homes of these lovely British families over the last month, and the first thing they want is their loved ones back. But some of them have got the wrong remains, and they are clearly distraught over this. It has been going on for a couple of weeks, and I think these families deserve an explanation."

"The families are also directly in contact with their MPs, the FCDO, and the offices of the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary — ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to London," the report stated.

PHOTO: PTI

India rejected the report. The Ministry of External Affairs said all mortal remains were handled with utmost professionalism. "We have seen the report and have been working closely with the UK side from the moment these concerns and issues were brought to our attention," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. *—Agencies*

Govt identifies 11.8 L fraudulent pension beneficiaries

KARWAR, 23 JULY

The Karnataka government has identified over 11.8 lakh potentially fraudulent beneficiaries of social security pensions across the State, including 13,702 income tax payers, 117 government employees as per preliminary findings, Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda said.

Speaking at a review meeting on Wednesday, Gowda said Aadhaar verification also revealed thousands receiving old-age pensions despite not meeting the minimum age criteria. Furthermore, the government received complaints about able-bodied individuals availing disability pensions using forged certificates.

The Uttara Kannada district in-charge minister stated that steps will be taken at the government level to bring an end to such anomalies soon. In Uttara Kannada district alone, 11,956 such suspicious cases were flagged, including 351 income tax payers, he said.

Gowda also said that the State has launched a campaign to update outdated land records. Over 52.55 lakh land holdings still exist in the names of deceased farmers, rendering them ineligible for central schemes such as PM-Kisan. Officials have begun door-to-door campaigns to transfer ownership to legal heirs. In the past month alone, 20,000 such land title transfers have been completed.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

In Uttara Kannada, 1.90 lakh land parcels remain in the names of 57,000 deceased farmers. Revenue officials have been directed to transfer these titles free of charge within six months.

The government is also fast-tracking digitisation under the Bhu Suraksha scheme to prevent record tampering. The Bhu-Suraksha Project was launched in 2024 with the goal of digitising and securing land records across the State.

Of the targeted 100 crore pages of land documents, 33.1 crore have been scanned, with a six-month deadline to complete the remaining. Citizens will be able to access digitised land records online, eliminating the need to visit taluk offices, Gowda said. —*PTI*

Govt to partner with Bajaj Auto for ITI job skills

BENGALURU, 23 JULY

Karnataka government is in the final stages of forging a partnership with Bajaj Auto to provide industry-relevant employability skills to students in ITIs across the State. At a meeting convened by Sharanprakash Patil, Minister for Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood, the proposal to implement the Bajaj Manufacturing Systems (BMS) for Industrial Training Institutes students was actively discussed, they said. Five ITIs will be opened in four different regions along with Sedam taluk in Kalaburagi district. The course will be offered for free and after completion trainees will be recruited by leading automobile companies. They can also start their own ventures as auto dealers or mechanics. —*PTI*

PHOTO: SALAR

Fire personnel rescue 2 animals from pits in Kolar

KOLAR, 23 JULY

Fire personnel in KGF saved the lives of two milch animals, including a buffalo and a cow, in two separate incidents on 22 and 23 July. In both cases, the animals were pregnant and heavy. In the first incident, near M block in Oorgaum extension in KGF on Tuesday, an eight-year-old pregnant buffalo had fallen into an old pit about fifteen feet deep. Two fire personnel went into the pit, tied the animal and lifted it out with the help of the general public. In another incident that took place near Oorgaum railway station early Wednesday morning another pregnant cross breed cow had fallen in a huge drain filled with slush. Two fire personnel rescued the animal moved it to safety. Rescue operations took over two hours each in both incidents. —*Salar News*

Midday meal eggs cause stir in Mandya

MYSURU, 23 JULY

Disagreement over serving eggs in midday meals has disrupted classes at Halakere Higher and Primary Government School in Mandya taluk. Of the 120 students, 80 objected to eating eggs. The situation escalated after some parents accused the school of hurting religious sentiments by distributing eggs despite their objections. They pointed out that the Veerabhadreshwara temple stands behind the school and requested bananas as an alternative. However, the school continued to serve eggs. In protest, parents requested Transfer Certificates for their children, and a few students stopped attending school. Some parents asked the school to send eggs home instead. —*Salar News*

Kolar govt school gets a makeover, thanks to an NGO

MASTHI, 23 JULY

OSAAT, an NGO focused on improving government school infrastructure, completed renovation of a Government School in Masthi village, Malur taluk, Kolar, as part of its 100th school project. The revamped facility will be open for students from July 26. Veeranna Gowda of OSAAT said the Rs 12-crore project is funded by the Thakkar Family Foundation (USA). So far, Rs 7.5 crore has been spent on civil works, with the remaining Rs 4.5 crore to be used over five months for additional infrastructure. The upgraded school includes 18 classrooms, three labs, an auditorium, kitchen, and toilets. With over 1,750 students from Class 1 to II PU, the school attracts learners from across the region, said BEO Chandrakala. — *Salar News*

GST row: CM says won't pursue 2 to 3-yr-old cases

Traders withdraw strike call after meeting Siddaramaiah

BENGALURU, 23 JULY

With small traders in the State going on the warpath over the government issuing GST notices based on UPI transactions and the Opposition backing them, the government on Wednesday announced that cases ranging between 2 and 3 years won't be pursued, prompting the trade bodies to call of their proposed agitation on 25 July.

On Wednesday, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah held discussions with traders' associations, which raised concerns about confusion over the GST notices, many of which include loan amounts and personal transactions. The CM said that old tax arrears will not be pursued, provided all such traders register under the GST Act and begin paying Goods and Services Tax moving forward. However, the government asserted that the action of issuing notices was within the framework of law. "We will not collect taxes from traders dealing in exempted goods, even if notices have been issued," Siddaramaiah said. "I have also instructed officials not to pursue cases related to notices for clearing arrears from the past two to three years."

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah interacts with people as he listens to their grievances on Wednesday PHOTO: PTI

The Chief Minister said the government will not pursue these arrears and will ensure traders do not face problems—provided they register with the Commercial Taxes Department.

"Traders must register. Registration is mandatory because everyone needs to be brought within the tax net," he said. He clarified that businesses dealing exclusively in exempted goods will not be required to register.

> **With the Congress government's treasury running dry, the Chief Minister has unleashed the Commercial Taxes Department to issue these notices to raise money.... There are three slabs under GST, but the Department is serving 18% tax notices indiscriminately**
>
> —BY Vijayendra, State BJP Chief

Prior to the announcement, several traders' associations had earlier called on businesses to boycott UPI transactions and announced a State-wide strike on Friday.

Meanwhile, Meera Suresh Pandit, Joint Commissioner of Commercial Taxes, clarified that notices are not final tax demands and the recipients have the right to respond with supporting documentation. If the reply is convincing or the goods and services are exempted under the GST Act, notices will be dropped. —*PTI*

Dharamsthala case: SC bins plea against gag order on media

NEW DELHI/ BENGALURU, 23 JULY

The Supreme Court on Wednesday declined to hear a petition challenging a sweeping gag order that restrained media houses from reporting on matters related to the brother of Dharamadhikari D Veerendra Heggade of Dharamsthala in Karnataka.

The gag order pertained to reports on alleged murders and rapes of women in Dharmasthala after a sanitation worker claimed that they buried "hundreds of bodies".

The plea, filed against an ex parte interim order of a local court, questioned the legality of the directive which directed as many as 390 media houses to remove nearly 9,000 links and stories related to the Dharamsthala burial case.

A bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justices K Vinod Chandran and Joymalya Bagchi asked the petitioner why the High Court had not been approached.

"You go the high court first," the CJI said.

The gag order was reportedly passed in a defamation suit filed by Harshendra Kumar, Secretary of Sri Manjunathaswamy Temple institutions, who highlighted the spread of allegedly false and defamatory content online, despite there being no specific allegations against him or the temple authorities in any FIR.

The plea in the apex court was filed by YouTube channel Third Eye against a City court order restraining the publication of any defamatory content against Harshendra Kumar D, brother of Dharmasthala Dharmadhikari Veerendra Heggade, in relation to the Dharmasthala temple burial case. —*PTI*

SIT to have 20 police officers

The SIT probing the Dharmasthala case will comprise 20 police officers of different ranks, right from Superintendent of Police to head constables, an order issued by DGP MA Saleem said. According to the order issued on Tuesday, the SIT will have CA Simon, an SP rank officer, two Deputy Superintendents of Police, five police inspectors, seven sub-inspectors, one assistant sub-inspector and four head constables.

Issue tenders & work orders in Kannada: KDA

UDUPI, 23 JULY

Kannada Development Authority (KDA) chairman Purushothama Bilimale on Wednesday urged officials to issue tenders, notifications, and work orders related to public infrastructure projects in Kannada.

He said this while speaking at a review meeting on Kannada implementation at the Udupi deputy commissioner's office.

Bilimale said,"Kannada has a heritage spanning over 2,000 years" and asked officials to show greater sensitivity in upholding the legacy of the language."

He warned that officials who fail to implement Kannada in administration will be held directly accountable.

Issuing tenders, notifications, and work orders related to public infrastructure projects in Kannada would not only empower local Kannada-speaking contractors, but also generate employment for local youth.

Bilimale further urged banks to appoint Kannada-speaking personnel at branches to ensure that locals can conduct routine banking with ease. He directed that a meeting of major banks in the district be convened to discuss this.

In the meeting, Udupi deputy commissioner, Swaroop TK assured that Kannada was being appropriately used in the district administration and that the language's implementation would be prioritised in all upcoming Karnataka Development Programme meetings. —*PTI*

24 students taken ill after consuming mid-day meal

BELAGAVI, 23 JULY

Students of the government primary school in Markandeya Nagar in Belagavi were hospitalised after they fell ill eating the mid-day meal served in the school on Wednesday.

Sources in State Education Department said that a lizard had fallen in the curry, thereby contaminating it. The curry was served with plain rice to the students.

Belagavi deputy director of Public Instructions, Leelavati Hiremath visited the hospitals where the hospital to enquire about the condition of the sick students.

Hiremath said that the teachers along with villagers helped shift students to two local private hospitals after more students complained of vomiting and dehydration. Samples of the food were sent for examination. —*Salar News*

Lokayukta raids IAS officer and 7 others

BENGALURU, 23 JULY

- IAS officer Vasanthi Amar BV was posted as Special Deputy Commissioner in the land acquisition section of K-RIDE

Lokayukta sleuths on Wednesday carried out searches at premises connected to eight officers, including an IAS officer, in connection with a disproportionate assets case.

IAS officer Vasanthi Amar BV was posted as Special Deputy Commissioner in the land acquisition section of Railway Infrastructure Development Company, Karnataka (K-RIDE). She entrusted with providing land to the ambitious Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project (BSRP).

Sources in K-RIDE said the activities at BSRP were stalled after the contractor firm threatened to stop the work in the absence of land acquisition for the project.

The officers who were targeted in the raid are Manjunathaswamy M, Joint Director Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and livelihood Department in Madikeri, the district headquarters town of Kodagu; B Venkatarama, office Assistant (Admin) Mysuru Mahanagara Palilke, Rajesh M Assistant Executive Engineer, KIADB, Tumakuru; Sunil Kumar Executive Engineer, Family and Welfare office, Engineering Section, Kalaburagi.

Other officials targetted in the raid are: Sheku, Assistant Director, District Industries Centre, Koppal; Bagli Maruti Assistant Director, City and Rural Project Department, Bengaluru City; and HV Yerappa Reddy Executive Engineer, BBMP. —*PTI*

State responds to Goa CM over Mahadayi river remarks

BENGALURU, 23 JULY

PHOTOS: WIKIPEDIA

Mahadayi river begins in K'taka's Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary and flows through Goa and Maharashtra

The State government on Wednesday strongly objected to Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant's remarks in the Goa Assembly on the Mahadayi river water-sharing issue, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil said.

The objection came after Sawant told the Assembly that that the Goa government would file a contempt petition in the Supreme Court against Karnataka for trying to divert Mahadayi river water.

Patil said the dispute was adjudicated under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act by a tribunal that delivered its final verdict and has since come into effect.

Karnataka had sought diversion of 7.56 TMC ft from the Kalasa-Banduri project to the Malaprabha river basin, of which 3.90 TMC ft was allocated to the State, which the tribunal permitted.

He blamed the Centre for "failing to grant necessary clearances".

Meanwhile, AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami claimed the Cauvery Delta districts in Tamil Nadu will become a desert if Karnataka constructs the balancing reservoir across the Cauvery river. —*PTI*

9 HRS OF HELL

Digital arrest: 2 women forced to strip

BENGALURU, 23 JULY

Two women were allegedly held hostage on a video call for nearly nine hours and forced to strip naked under the pretext of an "online medical examination" by fraudsters posing as police officers in a case of "digital arrest", police said on Wednesday.

The women were also "threatened with the nude images and videos recorded during the so-called medical examination," which the fraudsters claimed was necessary to identify birthmarks and moles, police said.

In the FIR, a 46-year-old City woman said she and her childhood friend, an international instructor based in Thailand who is currently visiting India, were scammed by individuals claiming to be police officials from the Colaba Police Station in Mumbai.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

On 17 July, around 11am, her friend received a call from the fraudsters, who alleged that she was involved in a "Jet Airways scam". The fraudsters accused her of " money laundering, trafficking, and even murder."

They shared her bank card details. Fearing serious consequences, the women transferred Rs 58,477 to a specified bank account, as instructed.

The women were also threatened with what appeared to be official documents — an arrest warrant and other paperwork supposedly from the CBI — related to money laundering.

"They then told us we were under digital and home arrest and ordered us to remain on a WhatsApp video call for 24 hours. We weren't allowed to leave the house, as they claimed we were under surveillance," the complainant stated. Later, her childhood friend managed to contact another friend via WhatsApp and narrated their ordeal, who made her disconnect the call.

Soon after, the fraudsters began sending them their nude photos — captured during the so-called medical examination — and threatened to make them public.

"For about nine hours, we were subjected to continuous harassment," she added.

Digital arrest is a term used in cyber fraud cases where victims are falsely informed that they are under surveillance or in legal custody through digital means. Fraudsters often pose as government to manipulate the victims. —*PTI*

Man duped of Rs 15.5L in online scam

UDUPI, 23 JULY

A 34-year-old man allegedly lost over Rs 15.5 lakh to an online scam after being lured into a fraudulent investment scheme via a messaging app, police said on Wednesday.

The victim, identified as Ashwith, filed a complaint at the Karkala town police station, following which an FIR was registered under the Information Technology Act, they added.

Ashwith, according to police, received a WhatsApp message on 28 January, 2025, from a number registered under the name Meena Sakpal, inviting him to join an "S-coin investment task" through the app.

Believing the message to be "genuine", he followed the instructions, shared his account details, and made multiple payments between 29 January and 19 June, 2025.

A total of Rs 15,52,650, was transferred from his Maharashtra Bank account in Mangaluru to a UPI-linked account. After making the payments, he was asked to invest more and later told to pay a tax to retrieve his money, a senior police officer said.

When the funds were not returned, Ashwith approached the police. Further investigation is underway, police said. —*PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Willing for meaningful talk with India: Pak PM

ISLAMABAD, 23 JULY

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said his country was willing for a "meaningful dialogue" with India to resolve all outstanding issues. Sharif made the remarks while talking to British High Commissioner Jane Marriott, who called on the Prime Minister at the PM House, according to an official statement. The two discussed bilateral relations as well as the regional situation in South Asia and the Middle East. "The Prime Minister expressed his appreciation for the UK's role in de-escalation of tensions during the Pakistan-India standoff & reiterated that Pakistan was ready for a meaningful dialogue with India on all outstanding issues," statement said. —*PTI*

EC begins process to pick Vice Prez

The vice president will be elected by the members of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

The Election Commission on Wednesday said it has begun the process of holding the vice presidential election, two days after Jagdeep Dhankhar's surprise resignation from the post.

The poll authority said it has started constituting the electoral college comprising MPs of both Houses of Parliament. Both elected and nominated members are eligible to vote in the vice presidential election.

It is also finalising the returning officer and assistant returning officers.

"On completion of the preparatory activities, the announcement of the election schedule to the office of the Vice President of India will follow as soon as possible," the EC said.

The poll authority said it has started constituting the electoral college comprising MPs of both Houses of Parliament **PHOTO: PTI**

Dhankhar stepped down as vice president on Monday, citing health reasons.

According to Clause 2 of Article 68 of the Constitution, an election to fill a vacancy in the office of the vice president occurring due to his death, resignation or removal, or otherwise, will be held "as soon as possible" after it goes vacant.

The person elected to fill the vacancy will be entitled to hold office "for the full term of five years from the date on which he enters upon his office".

From the day the notification is issued, "calling the electoral college to vote", and till the day of the poll, a period of 30 days is stipulated.

A person cannot be elected as the vice president unless he is a citizen of India, has completed 35 years of age and is qualified for election as a member of the Rajya Sabha.

The vice president is elected by the members of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

- From the day the notification is issued, "calling the electoral college to vote", and till the day of the poll, a period of 30 days is stipulated. A person cannot be elected as the vice president unless he is a citizen of India, has completed 35 years of age and is qualified for election as a member of the Rajya Sabha.

Additionally, before his surprise resignation, Dhankhar made an "unscheduled visit" to the Rashtrapati Bhavan late on Monday evening, official sources said.

Dhankhar met President Murmu around 9 pm on Monday and handed over his resignation to her. Half an hour later, he made his resignation letter public on X, they said.

Meanwhile, CPI (M) MP John Brittas said that the government must clarify the circumstances surrounding Dhankhar's resignation on Wednesday.

In a post on X, he also said that if the government maintains silence over the issue, Dhankhar should "break his silence to uphold the dignity of the office". —*PTI*

'Largest liquor scam in Andhra under Naidu govt'

AMARAVATI, 23 JULY

YSRCP leader Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy on Wednesday accused the Andhra Pradesh government of orchestrating the "country's largest-ever liquor scam" under Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu. Speaking to media after visiting his son and Rajampet MP Mithun Reddy in Rajamahendravaram central jail, he alleged that the TDP-led government has revived illicit liquor trade, turning Andhra Pradesh into "Madhyandhra Pradesh" (alcoholic state) rife with corruption. The previous YSRCP government ensured that liquor sales were tightly regulated through government-run outlets, which led to a significant reduction in sales while increasing state revenue by Rs 25,000 crore annually, pointed out Reddy. —*PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Gadkari to receive Lokmanya Tilak National Award

PUNE, 23 JULY

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari will be conferred with this year's Lokmanya Tilak National Award, it was announced on Wednesday. The award was instituted by the Lokmanya Tilak Smarak Trust in 1983. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi had received the award in 2023, the last year's recipient was writer & Rajya Sabha member Sudha Murty. The award ceremony will be held on 1 August to mark the 105th death anniversary of Tilak, an iconic leader of the freedom movement, trust president Dr Rohit Tilak said at a press conference here. Rohit Tilak highlighted Gadkari's contribution to national infrastructure on this occasion. The award comprises a memento, citation and cash prize of Rs 1 lakh. —*PTI*

India taking active interest in Arctic, Antarctic: Tharoor

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor said on Wednesday that India is taking active interest in the polar regions of Arctic and Antarctic as he chaired a meeting of Parliament's Standing Committee on External Affairs. Senior officials of the ministries of external affairs and earth sciences briefed the committee members. Though developed countries are ahead of India in terms of presence in the two regions, which carry increasing geopolitical significance, India has also become involved and is taking active interest in both places, he said. It was a very unusual and interesting topic, he said, noting that Arctic and Antarctic are very important for scientific exploration. While Arctic has faced some geopolitical conflict, Antarctic is considered a "global common", he added. —*PTI*

Mandaviya introduces sports governance bill in Lok Sabha

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Wednesday introduced the National Sports Governance Bill in Lok Sabha that proposes to institute a Board which will have sweeping powers to lay down rules and oversee the functioning of federations, including the cash-rich BCCI.

Mandaviya introduced the bill that has provisions for a National Sports Board (NSB) to create a stringent system of accountability.

All National Sports Federations (NSFs) will have to attain NSB's recognition for access to central government funding.

Another striking feature is the proposal for a National Sports Tribunal, which will have the powers of a civil court and decide disputes ranging from selection to election involving federations and athletes. Once instituted, Tribunal's decisions can only be challenged in the Supreme Court.

DMK MP TR Baalu, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, SP MP Akhilesh Yadav, and other memeber of the INDIA bloc protest against Bihar Special Intensive Revision, in New Delhi, on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

The bill makes some concessions on the issue of age cap for administrators by allowing those in the bracket of 70 to 75 to contest elections if the concerned international bodies' statutes and byelaws allow for it.

"...as a part of the preparatory activities for the bidding of Summer Olympic Games 2036, it is imperative that the sports governance landscape undergoes a positive transformation to bring better outcomes, sporting excellence and aids in improved performance in major international competitions," read the bill's statement of objectives. —*PTI*

Daal mein kuch kala hai: RaGa on Trump's truce claim

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday attacked the government over US President Donald Trump repeating his claims about bringing about a ceasefire between India and Pakistan.

He said, "What will he (Modi) say -- Trump got it done? He can't say that. But that is the truth. Trump got the ceasefire done, the whole world knows.... Trump has said it 25 times. So, 'kuch na kuch toh daal mein kala hai na' (something is fishy)." —*PTI*

With a pic of SP Chief Akhilesh Yadav with MPs, BJP accused SP of holding a meeting in a mosque near Parliament.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao: Centre says it spent 2% of the total budget on ads in 5 years, not 80% as claimed by Oppn.

Serial borrower Pak steeped in fanaticism: India at UN

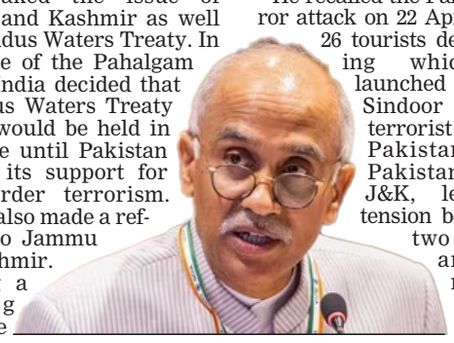
UNITED NATIONS, 23 JULY

India told a UN Security Council meeting presided over by Pakistan that there should be a "serious cost" to nations who foment cross-border terrorism, as it described the neighbouring country as a "serial borrower" steeped in "fanaticism".

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish delivered the statement on Tuesday at the high-level open debate on 'Promoting International Peace and Security through Multilateralism and Peaceful Settlement of Disputes' held under Pakistan's presidency of the 15-nation Council for July.

Pakistan Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar presided over the open debate that was also addressed by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

Dar raked the issue of Jammu and Kashmir as well as the Indus Waters Treaty. In the wake of the Pahalgam attack, India decided that the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 would be held in abeyance until Pakistan abjures its support for cross-border terrorism. Turkey also made a reference to Jammu and Kashmir.



Giving a strong response to Dar's remarks, Harish said, "On the one hand, there is India, which is a mature democracy, a surging economy and a pluralistic and inclusive society. At the other extreme is Pakistan, steeped in fanaticism and terrorism, and a serial borrower from the IMF (International Monetary Fund). In May this year, the IMF had approved disbursement of about one billion dollars to Pakistan under Extended Fund Facility (EFF), bringing total disbursements under the arrangement to about USD 2.1 billion.

Harish added that a "serious cost" must be imposed on those fomenting terrorism.

He recalled the Pahalgam terror attack on 22 April that left 26 tourists dead, following which India launched Operation Sindoor targeting terrorist camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied J&K, leading to tension between the two nuclear-powered neighbours. —*PTI*

- At the other extreme is Pakistan, steeped in fanaticism and terrorism, and a serial borrower from the IMF (International Monetary Fund).

ED attaches ex-TMC MP's ₹127 cr shares in ponzi scam

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday said it has attached more than Rs 127 crore worth of shares "beneficially owned" by the son of former TMC MP and businessman Kanwar Deep Singh in a money laundering case. The case is linked to an alleged Rs 1,900 crore ponzi scheme fraud.

The money laundering case is based on the FIRs filed by Kolkata Police and CBI against the Alchemist Township, the Alchemist Infra Realty and the Alchemist Group's directors including Kanwar.

The accused were charged with orchestrating a large-scale criminal conspiracy to illegally raise Rs 1,848 crore through collective investment schemes, by offering investors unusually high returns or falsely promising to allot them plots, flats and villas.

"The misappropriated funds were systematically layered through complex financial transactions involving the Alchemist Group entities," the agency said.

The 40.94 per cent shares of Alchemist Hospital and 37.24 per cent shares of Ojas Hospital, both located in Panchkula, are held by Sorus Agritech, a company "beneficially owned" by Karan Deep Singh, son of Kanwar Deep Singh. —*PTI*

You were a child: Nitish loses it over SIR

PATNA, 23 JULY

High drama unfolded in Bihar Assembly on Wednesday after Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's intervention during Leader of the Opposition Tejashwi Yadav's statement on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls triggered a heated exchange.

The situation escalated quickly, prompting Speaker Nand Kishor Yadav to adjourn the proceedings till 2pm, barely 30 minutes after the House had convened at 11am.

Yadav, who was wearing a black T-shirt as a mark of protest against the Election Commission's exercise, was allowed by the Speaker to make a statement on the issue.

Yadav said, "We are not opposed to the SIR per se, but how the Election Commission has been carrying out the exercise is objectionable. Why so late, when elections are just around the corner?"

Bihar CM Nitish Kumar and Opposition Leader Tejashwi Yadav **PHOTO: PTI**

Kuma, unhappy with the discussion being allowed in the first place, said, "You are a child. You know nothing of matters like these. When parents were CMs, they did nothing, neither for the women, nor for Muslims, nor any other section of society. The only woman who got something was his mother".

Cabinet colleagues of the CM, were seen tugging at his sleeves to make him take his seat. —*PTI*

1 lakh Bihar voters are untraceable, says poll body

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

In the ongoing Special Intensive Revision of voters' list in Bihar, as many as one lakh electors remain "untraceable", while enumeration forms of 7.17 crore people have been received and digitised, the Election Commission said on Wednesday.

It also said that while 20 lakh electors have been reported "deceased" so far, 28 lakh others were found to have permanently shifted from their present addresses. —*PTI*

A DIVINE MESS

'Need half a month to clean after Kanwar Yatra'

HARIDWAR, 23 JULY

The flow of devotees to Haridwar during the two-week-long Kanwar Yatra ended on Wednesday, but it would take another fortnight for the authorities to fully clean up the tonnes of garbage they have left behind.

A record 5.5 crore kanwariyas visited Haridwar this year, officials said.

According to an estimate, so much waste has accumulated that a proper cleaning campaign would take at least half a month.

Garbage disposal during the yatra had been a problem for the administration as the huge crowds of pilgrims made some areas inaccessible for the sanitation trucks.

"During Kanwar Yatra, lakhs of kanwariyas reached Haridwar by foot and in vehicles every day. This made it impossible for the sanitation workers to take garbage trucks everywhere. As a result, regular cleaning was not done in some areas. But in the areas where they were able to go, cleaning continued uninterrupted," District Magistrate Mayur Dixit said.

A record 5.5 crore kanwariyas visited Haridwar this year, leaving behind a corpus amount of waste **PHOTO: PTI**

Municipal Commissioner Nandan Kumar also admitted that constant arrival of devotees to Haridwar in the last 15 days had badly hit the regular cleaning system.

Cleaning of the city area has already begun; in the initial phase, urban roads and Ganga ghats are being cleaned, he said.

Around thousand sanitation workers are deployed for cleaning the municipal corporation area, he added.

- Around thousand sanitation workers are deployed for cleaning the municipal corporation area, as the constant flow of devotees disrupted the regular cleaning systems.

KANWAR YATRA ENDS

Haridwar in Uttarakhand resonated with chants of 'Har Har Mahadev' and 'Bam Bam Bhole' as the fortnight-long Kanwar Yatra ended on Wednesday with lakhs of devotees thronging the banks of the Ganga to collect the waters of the holy river and perform 'jalabhishek' at Shiva temples in the town on Sawan Shivratri.

According to Mela Control Room sources, more than 4.5 crore devotees reached Haridwar this year to collect Ganga water during the Kanwar Yatra. —*PTI*

The suspects were reportedly trained in handling weapons and radical ideology at different undisclosed locations **PHOTO: PTI**

4 Al-Qaeda operatives arrested in Gujarat

GUJARAT, 23 JULY

Gujarat's Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) arrested four persons allegedly linked to Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) – a banned terror outfit - in Ahmedabad on Wednesday. "Four persons linked to the proscribed terror outfit have been arrested," the anti-terror agency said.

According to a statement from the Delhi Police, "The module, as per the current state of operations, was being led by one Dr Ishtiyaq of Ranchi, and it was aspiring to declare 'khilafat' and execute serious terrorist activities within the country."

Acting on critical intelligence inputs, the multi-state operation exposed the module's structure and intentions in August last year. The suspects were reportedly trained in handling weapons and radical ideology at different undisclosed locations.

During the operation, six suspects were apprehended in Bhiwadi, Rajasthan, where they were undergoing weapons training. Eight more individuals were taken into custody from various locations in Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh for further interrogation. Police also seized arms, ammunition, and extremist literature linked to the module's plans. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

NewsClick: Prabir Purkayastha gets pre-arrest bail

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday granted anticipatory bail to NewsClick founder and editor-in-chief Prabir Purkayastha accused of receiving funds to publish pro-China content.

Justice Neena Bansal Krishna also extended the relief in a separate money laundering case filed by the Enforcement Directorate.

Similar protection was granted to NewsClick director Pranjal Pandey in a case registered by the Economic Offences Wing of Delhi Police. In 2021, both were given interim protection from arrest. The EOW alleges that PPK NewsClick Studio Pvt Ltd received £920,000 in foreign investment from Worldwide Media Holdings LLC in USA during 2018–19, in violation of Indian FDI rules. A detailed court order is awaited. *—PTI*

HC stays legal action against Drishti IAS founder

JAIPUR, 23 JULY

Rajasthan High Court on Wednesday stayed further proceedings in a defamation case against Drishti IAS founder, Vikas Divyakirti going on in an Ajmer court.

The court stayed the proceedings after Divyakirti sought the defamation complaint filed against him in the subordinate court dismissed. The complaint was filed over his defamatory comments on the functioning of the legal system and judiciary. The local court summoned him on 22. However, he filed an application for exemption from personal appearance, after which he was directed to appear on 2 August. Such statements made in a closed environment cannot amount to defamation and Divyakirti had a fundamental right to express his opinions, said his counsel. *—PTI*

37% children under five stunted: Govt data

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

37.07 per cent of children under five registered on the Poshan Tracker were found to be stunted, 15.93 per cent under weight and 5.46 per cent wasted, government data stated. 'Wasted' is a condition where a person is too thin for her or his height. Uttar Pradesh reported the highest rate of stunting at 48.83 per cent, followed by Jharkhand at 43.26 per cent, Bihar at 42.68 per cent and Madhya Pradesh at 42.09 per cent. 8.61 crore children up to the age of six years were registered for these services as of June, with 8.91 crore registering in 2024. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

4 kanwariyas killed, over 60 injured in accidents

GWALIOR, 23 JULY

Five Kanwar Yatra devotees were killed and over 60 injured in separate road accidents in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, police said on Wednesday.

In Gwalior, four kanwariyas from Simaria village died when a speeding car hit them around 2am near NH-3. A tyre burst caused the driver to lose control. The car overturned after the collision, and its occupants fled. Locals protested, demanding arrests. In Muzaffarnagar, Hansraj, 29 from Delhi was killed after an unidentified vehicle struck his motorcycle while returning from Haridwar. 68 kanwariyas were injured in minor incidents across the district. Many continued the pilgrimage after treatment, though some of them were hospitalised. *—PTI*

SC bench to hear Justice Varma's plea

Justice Varma sought quashing of ex-CJI's recommendation for his impeachment

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said it would constitute a bench to hear Allahabad High Court judge Justice Yashwant Varma's plea seeking to invalidate a report by an in-house inquiry panel, which found him guilty of misconduct in the cash discovery row.

Justice Varma has also sought quashing of the 8 May recommendation by then Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna urging Parliament to initiate impeachment against him.

The matter was mentioned for urgent listing before a bench comprising Chief Justice B R Gavai and Justices K Vinod Chandran and Joymalya Bagchi.

"We will take a call and constitute a bench," the CJI said.

In his petition, Justice Varma submitted that the inquiry "reversed the burden of proof", requiring him to investigate and disprove the charges levelled against him.

Alleging that the panel's findings were based on a preconceived narrative, Justice Varma said the inquiry timelines were driven solely by the urge to conclude proceedings swiftly, even at the expense of "procedural fairness".

Justice Varma in his petition said that the enquiry reversed the burden of proof, requiring him to disprove the allegations against him *PHOTO: PTI*

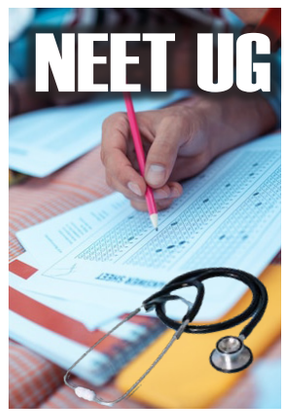
The inquiry panel drew adverse findings without affording him a full and fair hearing.

The enquiry panel's report stated that Justice Varma and his family members had covert or active control over the store room where a huge cache of half-burnt cash was found, proving his misconduct.

The three-judge panel headed by Chief Justice Sheel Nagu of the Punjab and Haryana High Court conducted the inquiry for 10 days, examined 55 witnesses and visited the scene of the accidental fire that started at around 11.35 pm on March 14 at the official residence of Justice Varma, then a sitting judge of the Delhi High Court and now in the Allahabad High Court. *—PTI*

SC refuses to permit NEET-UG counselling

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY



The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to grant its provisional nod for appearing in counselling of NEET-UG-2025 to two candidates, who faced power outage in their examination centres in Madhya Pradesh.

The court however, listed petitions of Navya Nayak and S Sai Priya for hearing on 25 July.

The candidates challenged the Madhya Pradesh High Court's order refusing to order a re-test for them.

The petitioners said sought a provisional permission to participate in the counselling.

The counsel for the National Testing Agency (NTA) said the request for a re-test couldn't be allowed as it would affect lakhs of students, who wrote the examination.

The bench declined issuing interim directions and deferred the hearing.

The high court had directed the NTA to conduct retest of the NEET-UG-2025 examination for candidates affected by power outage at centres in Indore and Ujjain. *—PTI*

SC to hear on eco-tourism projects

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a plea challenging eco-tourism constructions inside Odisha's Satkosia Tiger Reserve. Advocate Gaurav Kumar Bansal argued that district collectors unlawfully granted permissions, violating the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The plea claims the proposed zero-kilometre eco-sensitive zone breaches National Tiger Conservation Authority guidelines, which mandate a minimum one-km buffer. It accuses the state of undermining wildlife laws. *—PTI*

Rains lash T'gana; red alert in Delhi

Commuters move through a waterlogged road during rain, in Telangana's Hyderabad; the site of the landslide in Mumbai's Bhandup area *PHOTO: PTI/X*

HYDERABAD, 23 JULY

- Very heavy rainfall was predicted in Adilabad, Komaram Bheem Asifabad, Mancherial, Karimnagar, Peddapalli, Jayashankar Bhupalapally, Mulugu, Bhadradri Kothagudem, Mahabubabad, Warangal, and Hanamkond districts of Telangana.

Heavy rains lashed several parts of Telangana, inundating roads and disrupting normal life. With the IMD forecasting heavy rainfall over the next three days, officials have stepped up precautionary measures to manage the situation.

Light to moderate showers lashed Hyderabad on 22 July and Wednesday.

State Transport Minister and Hyderabad district in-charge Ponnam Prabhakar held a review meeting to assess the preparedness.

Prabhakar urged residents to stay alert and instructed officials to take all necessary steps to minimise public inconvenience.

Cyberabad Police issued an advisory, urging IT and other companies to allow employees to work from home.

Very heavy rainfall was predicted in Adilabad, Komaram Bheem Asifabad, Mancherial, Karimnagar, Peddapalli, Jayashankar Bhupalapally, Mulugu, Bhadradri Kothagudem, Mahabubabad, Warangal, and Hanamkond districts.

Waterlogging and traffic snarls crippled vehicular movement in Delhi during office hours after heavy rains lashed the city on Wednesday morning.

North West and South West Delhi are under an orange alert, while South Delhi and North East Delhi are on red alert. A row of houses were damaged in a landslide in Bhandup (West) in Maharashtra's Mumbai on 22 July. An orange alert was issued for Mumbai and Palghar. A red alert was issued for Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg. *—PTI*

Doha bound AI flight faces tech glitch

MALAPPURAM, 23 JULY

An Air India Express flight bound to Doha from Calicut International Airport on Wednesday returned a couple of hours after take-off due to some technical fault, airport officials said.

An airport official said that flight IX 375 with 188 persons, including the pilots and crew, took off from Calicut at 9.07am, but returned to the same airport at 11.12 am.

"There was some technical issue in the aircraft's cabin AC. It was not an emergency landing," the official said.

The passengers have been deboarded, he said and added that either the technical issue would be rectified or another aircraft would be arranged for them to resume their journey.

An Air India Express spokesperson said that it was a "precautionary landing" in view of a technical error, and an alternative flight would be arranged for the passengers by 1.30 pm.

"Till then all arrangements, like food and water, have been made for the passengers at the airport," he said. *—PTI*

MIAL gets relief over replacing Celebi for ground service

MUMBAI, 23 JULY

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday set aside its earlier interim order restraining the Mumbai International Airport Limited from finalising tenders for ground and bridge handling services post termination of Turkish firm Celebi's contract.

The court said the interim protection granted cannot be continued as the Delhi HC had dismissed Celebi's petition against similar contract termination of the Delhi airport and revocation of security clearance. *—PTI*

28 ACTORS, INFLUENCERS BOOKED

Rana fails to appear before ED, summoned

HYDERABAD, 23 JULY

The Enforcement Directorate has given a fresh date of 11 August to actor Rana Daggubati after he failed to appear on Wednesday for questioning in a money laundering case linked to illegal online betting and gambling by certain platforms, sources said.

The sources said the 40-year-old sought deferment of the summons and Daggubati has now been asked to depose on 11 August, they said.

Apart from Daggubati, actor Prakash Raj, 60, has been summoned to appear on 30 July, Vijay Deverakonda, 36, on 6 August and Lakshmi Manchu, 47, on 13 August, sources said.

A total of 28 actors, celebrities, social media influencers and the management personnel of these apps have been booked by the ED for "promoting" the online betting apps that are allegedly involved in generating "illicit" funds. *—PTI*

Kirron Kher to pay Rs 12.76 lakh dues for home

CHANDIGARH, 23 JULY

Former BJP MP Kirron Kher has been served a notice demanding Rs 12.76 lakh in dues for a government-allotted house in Chandigarh. The notice, issued by the Assistant Controller (Finance and Controller) Rents Office, concerns a house occupied by her when she was an MP.

The outstanding licence fee from July 2023 to October, 2024 is Rs 5,725.

A 100 per cent penalty of Rs 3.64 lakh applies for unauthorised stay until January, 2025, followed by a 200 per cent penalty of Rs 8.20 lakh. *—PTI*

TN's per capita income exceeds national average

CHENNAI, 23 JULY

MK Stalin *PHOTO: ANI*

The per capita income in Tamil Nadu has surpassed the national average and even registered a two-fold growth than what was witnessed during the AIADMK rule in the state, Chief Minister MK Stalin claimed on Wednesday.

Sharing a post by state Finance Minister Thangam Thennarasu, the Chief Minister said, "We have surpassed the national average! We have surpassed the growth of the last AIADMK regime by two times!"

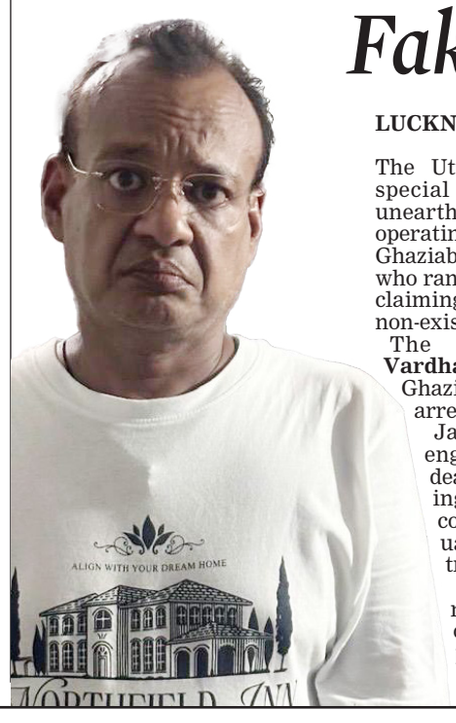
"We will rise as the first state in the upcoming Dravidian Model 2.0!" Stalin posted on X.

In his post, Thennarasu had said that under the leadership of Mr Stalin, Tamil Nadu has set a precedent for the country by making great achievements in industry, education, infrastructure and social welfare. "Another achievement in the long list is Tamil Nadu has secured the second place among the states with a per capita income of Rs 1,96,309. This achievement reflects the success of the Dravidian model's visionary plans, industrial development, efforts to attract investments and welfare schemes," Thennarasu. The state will have a trillion US dollar economy. *—PTI*

- Sharing a post by state Finance Minister Thangam Thennarasu, the Chief Minister said, "We have surpassed the national average! We have surpassed the growth of the last AIADMK regime by two times!"

NATION THAT DOES NOT EXIST

Fake 'West Arctica' embassy busted; 1 held



LUCKNOW, 23 JULY

The Uttar Pradesh police's special task force has unearthed a fake embassy operating in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad and arrested a man who ran the "consulate" while claiming to be a diplomat of non-existent 'West Arctica.'

The accused, **Harsh Vardhan Jain,** a resident of Ghaziabad's Kavi Naga was arrested on 22 July.

Jain was reportedly engaged in brokering deals by falsely promising job placements for companies and individuals in foreign countries.

He also ran a hawala racket through shell companies. He misled people by using morphed photos showing him with the prime minister, the president, and other dignitaries.

The cars bearing fake diplomatic number plates being used by Harsh Vardhan Jain; his collection of expensive watches *PHOTO: ANI*

Jain reportedly ran the bogus embassy from a rented house, projected himself as an ambassador of non-existent countries such as West Arctica, Saborga, Poulvia, and Lodonia, and moved in vehicles bearing fake diplomatic number plates. He was associated with godman Chandraswami and international arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi in the past. He was also booked in an illegal satellite phone recovery case.

Four vehicles, 12 forged diplomatic passports, fake documents stamped with the Ministry of External Affairs' seal, forged PAN cards, 34 rubber stamps of various countries and companies, fake press cards and Rs 44.7 lakh in cash were seized. An FIR has been lodged. *—PTI*

Schools in Agra, Meerut receive bomb threats

AGRA, 23 JULY

Private schools in Agra and Meerut received bomb threats via email, prompting thorough checks by bomb disposal and dog squads, police said on Wednesday.

Agra ACP Vinayak Bhosale confirmed that Shri Ram and Global schools were searched, but nothing suspicious was found. Normal classes have resumed. The cyber cell's initial probe suggests the emails originated from Kolkata.

In Meerut, Diwan Public School received a similar threat on Tuesday. As all schools were closed for the Kanwar Yatra, there was no panic, said District Magistrate VK Singh. SSP Vipin Tada confirmed investigations are ongoing, with the email traced to Kolkata. *—PTI*

PRINCE OF DARKNESS

People place flowers on Ozzy Osbourne's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. John Michael Ozzy Osbourne, known for his role as the gloomy, demon-invoking lead singer of the heavy metal band Black Sabbath passed away at the age of 76, just weeks after his farewell show
PHOTO: PTI

K'taka traders fret over GST notice on UPI transfers

Amid rising concerns among traders in Karnataka over the issuance of nearly 6,000 GST demand notices based on UPI transaction data, a top tax official has termed the action as within the framework of law.

Traders' bodies have gave a strike call over the matter.

Speaking to PTI, Meera Suresh Pandit, Joint Commissioner of Commercial Taxes, also clarified that notices are not final tax demands and the recipients have the right to respond with supporting documentation. If the reply is convincing or the goods and services are exempted under the GST Act, notices will be dropped, she added.

Reacting to the issue of notices sent to traders based on UPI transactions, a number of traders associations in the state have given a call to the traders to boycott UPI transactions. They have also called for a strike on 25 July.

Responding to the proposed strike and calls to revert to cash-only transactions, Pandit explained in detail the rationale behind the notices.

"When a person reaches the threshold limit of Rs 20 lakh for services or Rs 40 lakh for goods, it is mandatory for the person to get registered under the GST Act to take registration and declare his turnover," the officer told PTI.

"The registration empowers the trader to collect taxes from the consumers and pay it to the government. These taxes are meant for the government, but when the dealers collect them and fail to remit them, they are treated as unregistered persons, and we issue notices accordingly."

The department, she said, cannot individually identify every trader evading registration. Instead, the Services Analysis Wing at the department's head office used reliable sources such as UPI transaction data to flag potential defaulters.

"If a person has transacted over Rs 20 lakh for services or Rs 40 lakh for goods in a year through UPI, it indicates that they may be liable to register under GST," Pandit said, adding that notices were based only on preliminary data, not final determinations.

Meera Suresh Pandit, Joint Commissioner of Commercial Taxes, clarified that notices are not final tax demands and the recipients have the right to respond with supporting documentation
PHOTO: PTI

The officer said the department is not aware whether the turnover is entirely exempted, partially taxable, or fully taxable. That is why the notice includes a proposal to register and pay applicable taxes, interest, and penalties.

"If the turnover is completely exempted from goods or services like tuition fees, the registration is not required. If the reply is convincing, the notice will be dropped and proceedings will close with a nil demand," Pandit clarified.

She also addressed doubts prevailing among the trading circles.

"Some innocent traders are being carried away, hoping every notice will be withdrawn. Some are being misled. But if they want relief within legal provisions, I request them to come to the department. We will guide them as per the law," the Joint Commissioner said.

"Calling for a 'Bandh' will not serve the purpose. They may represent their concerns peacefully," she noted.

On concerns that UPI alone doesn't reveal the full turnover, Pandit said.

"There could be other modes of payment like cash, card, or net banking. So, if they are not liable for registration, they must explain and support their claim through written replies or personal hearings."

"Prior to the rollout of GST in July 2017, we conducted door-to-door awareness programmes, workshops, and released educational videos," she said.

"Even if traders fail to respond to the first notice, we send three reminders and conduct a field visit if necessary. Final assessment happens only after considering their response and facts," she said.

"We strictly adhere to the principles of natural justice and ensure every opportunity is given. When you buy a plot, you go to the sub-registrar's office without being told. Likewise, traders should know applicable tax laws. Ignorance cannot be an excuse. The department is always there to guide," she said.

Trade activist Sajjanraj Mehta raised concerns over the fairness of recent GST notices.

He stated that while the Commercial Taxes Department is legally within its powers to use such data, the lack of prior warning, context, and education has created confusion.

"Many small traders were unaware that their UPI inflows, often a mix of business and personal transactions, would be treated as undeclared turnover," Mehta told PTI.

"The fairness issue lies not in enforcement itself, but in the suddenness and lack of clarity," he added.

Mehta stressed that the department should differentiate between exempt and taxable goods before sending notices.

Issuing notices without accounting for exempt goods like fruits, vegetables, or unbranded food items shows a lack of nuance, he claimed.

Mehta acknowledged a growing trend among vendors in Bengaluru and Mysuru to shift away from UPI.

According to him, traders are currently seeking clear guidelines on how UPI transactions are treated under GST, a mechanism to contest mismatches or clarify exemptions without immediate penalties and awareness programmes in local languages. *—PTI*

SALAR ساڈا بنگلور

China begins construction of world's largest dam

China has started building the world's largest hydropower dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo river, which starts in the Himalayas, three days ago.

However, India and Bangladesh have both expressed concerns over the dam's potential impact.

China's Premier Li Qiang announced that construction has begun on what will be the world's largest hydropower dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo river, at the eastern rim of the Tibetan Plateau.

The announcement was made at the ceremony on Saturday, as reported by the Chinese media.

However, the planned dam has sparked concerns from India, Bangladesh and NGOs.

Why does China want to build the dam?

The Yarlung Tsangpo River, which is 2,900kms long, starts in the Himalayas and winds through what is said to be the world's deepest land-based canyon.

At one section, the river drops 6,561 feet in elevation within 50kms.

China has cited expanding renewable energy, reducing carbon emissions, and economic goals in the Tibet region as reasons behind the estimated USD 170 billion project.

"The electricity generated will be primarily transmitted to other regions for consumption, while also meeting local power needs in Tibet," state media reported.

The dam will reportedly consist of five cascade hydropower stations with capacity to produce 300 billion kilowatt hours of electricity each year — equivalent to the amount consumed by the UK last year.

India and Bangladesh raise concerns

As the Yarlung Tsangpo flows south, it becomes the Brahmaputra River in India and Bangladesh.

Millions rely on the river as a water source and for agriculture.

Both countries have expressed concerns over the dam's impact on millions of people living downstream. NGOs have also warned of risks of irreversible damage to the ecologically sensitive plateau.

In January, India's Foreign Ministry raised concerns with China, saying it will "monitor and take necessary measures to protect our interests."

The ministry stressed that China has been "urged to ensure that the interests of the downstream states of the Brahmaputra are not harmed by activities in upstream areas."

A 2020 report from the Lowry Institute, an Australian think tank, reported that "control over these rivers gives China a stranglehold on the Indian economy."

How has China responded to the concerns?

Chinese authorities have not said how many people would be displaced by the construction of the Yarlung project.

In December, China's Foreign Ministry said that the project would not have any "negative impact" downstream, adding that Beijing "will also maintain communication with countries at the lower reaches" of the river.

This is not the first time geopolitical issues have been raised by rivers crossing international borders.

The Yarlung Tsangpo dam is expected to be operational in the 2030s. *—DW News*

India and Bangladesh have expressed concerns over the dam's impact on millions of people living downstream
PHOTO: PTI

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Here's how National Sports Governance Bill will impact Indian sports

The National Sports Governance Bill was tabled in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday and although it is still some time before it becomes an Act, the introduction itself is a landmark move to revamp and standardise India's sports administration.

Here a look at its salient features that promise to overhaul several aspects of sports governance and the grievance redressal system for athletes and administrators alike in the country.

Age and tenure cap

The bill fixes the tenure limit at three consecutive terms adding up to 12 years for the posts of President, Secretary General and Treasurer in sports bodies. The age cap has been kept at 70, extending up to 75 at the time of nomination if permitted by the international charter and statutes of the concerned sport.

The Executive Committee strength of a sports body has been capped at 15 to ensure that the financial burden on the federation is not high. The EC would be mandated to have at least two sportspersons of outstanding merit and four women in the ranks.

National Sports Board

The most talked about feature of the bill is the National Sports Board (NSB), that will have overriding powers to grant or suspend recognition of all National Sports Federations (NSFs) and even "collaborate" with the international federations for athlete welfare.

The NSB will comprise a chairperson, and its members will be appointed by the central government from "amongst persons of ability, integrity and standing."

The appointments would be done based on the recommendations of a search-cum-selection committee, which would have the Cabinet Secretary or Secretary Sports as chairperson.

The other members of this panel will be the Director General of the Sports Authority of India, two sports administrators who have each served as the President or Secretary General or Treasurer of a National Sports Body and one eminent sportsperson.

The Board has been empowered to de-recognise a national body that fails to hold elections for its Executive Committee or has committed "gross irregularities in the election procedures."

In addition, failure to publish annual audited accounts or "misused, misapplied or misappropriated public funds" would also invite suspension from the NSB.

Only a recognised sports organisation will be eligible to receive grants or any other financial assistance from the central government.

PHOTO: PTI

National Sports Tribunal

According to the Sports Ministry, over 350 cases are currently in progress in various courts of the country over issues ranging from selection to election, significantly hampering the progress of athletes and NSFs. The setting up of a National Sports Tribunal promises to end that for good as it would have "all the powers of a civil court."

- The Executive Committee strength of a sports body has been capped at 15 to ensure that the financial burden on the federation is not high. The EC would be mandated to have at least two sportspersons of outstanding merit and four women in the ranks.

It will comprise a chairperson and two other members. The head of the Tribunal would be a sitting or retired judge of the Supreme Court or the Chief Justice of a High Court.

The appointments to this would also be in the hands of the central government based on recommendations of a committee that will be headed by Chief Justice of India or a Supreme Court judge recommended by the CJI and comprise the Sports Secretary and Secretary in the Ministry of Law and Justice.

The central government will have the power to remove its members in case of violations, including financial irregularities and actions prejudicial to "public interest".

The orders of this Tribunal would only be challengeable in the Supreme Court, which will ensure that no lower court would be involved in deciding disputes related to sports, making "jurisprudence stable and faster".

The appeal will also have to filed within 30 days of the tribunal's decision but the Supreme Court will hold authority.

National Sports Election Panel

This too shall be appointed by the central government on the recommendation of the on the National Sports Board. The panel will be made up of retired members of the Election Commission of India or the State Election Commission or retired Chief Electoral Officers of the States or Deputy Election Commissioners, with "adequate experience".

The panel will act as "electoral officers" to oversee the conduct of free and fair elections to the Executive Committees and the Athletes Committee of the sports bodies.

RTI

All recognised sports organisations will be covered under the Right to Information Act, 2005 "with respect to the exercise of its functions, duties and powers."

This is likely to be the bone of contention between the ministry and the BCCI, which will have to register itself as an NSF with the NSB after cricket became an Olympic sport, set for debut in the 2028 Games in the T20 format.

Govt's discretionary powers

Any sports organisation wanting to use the word "India" or "Indian" or "National" or any national insignia or symbols will have to obtain a No Objection Certificate from the central government.

The central government, if it considers "necessary and expedient in the public interest, will have also have the power to "relax" any of the provisions mentioned in the bill.

In addition, the government can also give such directions to the National Sports Board or any other person or entity for the "efficient administration" of the provisions of this bill.

The government will also be authorised to "impose reasonable restrictions on the participation of any national team of a concerned sport" under extraordinary circumstances and in the national interest. *—PTI*

15 die of starvation in Gaza in a day; 101 since war began

DEIR AL-BALAH, 23 JULY

At least 15 Palestinians, including four children, have died of starvation in a single day in the besieged Gaza Strip, according to health officials, bringing the total number of deaths from malnutrition since Israel's war began to 101, according to Al Jazeera. On Tuesday, at least 23 had starved to death in the Strip.

Most of the starvation related deaths have come in the past few weeks, with 80 of the 101 being children. Four of the 15 Palestinians who died were also children.

Since May, at least 1,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israel while trying to get aid from the , the UN Human Rights Office said. The UN has described the situation as a "horror show with a level of death and destruction without parallel in recent times".

This comes as Israeli strikes killed at least 21 late Tuesday and early Wednesday. More than half of those killed were women and children, health authorities said. Israel has also kidnapped one of Gaza's leading health officials, according to Al Jazeera.

More than 100 human rights groups and charities signed a letter published demanding more aid for Gaza and warning of grim conditions causing starvation.

Palestinians cling onto an aid truck returning to Gaza City from the northern Gaza Strip on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

- Most of the starvation deaths have come in the past few weeks, with 80 of the 101 being children. Four of the 15 Palestinians who died were also children. Since May, at least 1,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israel while trying to get aid

JOURNALISTS FEAR STARVATION

A group of journalists at the Agence France-Presse news agency is sounding the alarm about conditions faced by colleagues working in Gaza, saying that "without immediate intervention, the last reporters in Gaza will die."

One of AFP's photographers, sent a message on social media over the weekend that "I no longer have the strength to work for the media. My body is thin and I can't work anymore." Since AFP was founded in 1944, the Society of Journalists, an association at the agency, said that "we have lost journalists in conflicts, some have been injured, others taken prisoner. But none of us can ever remember seeing colleagues die of hunger."

—Agencies

Bangladesh jet crash toll rises to 32

DHAKA, 23 JULY

Grief and angst continued to grip Bangladesh on Wednesday, two days after a jet crashed on a school building as the death toll climbed to 32 with most victims being children. The F-7 BGI aircraft, a training fighter jet manufactured in China, experienced a "mechanical fault" moments after take-off and crashed into a two-storey building of Milestone School and College in Dhaka's Uttara area on Monday. Scores of others with burn wounds continued fighting for lives at different hospitals in the capital. The Milestone School formed its own committee to ascertain the accurate death toll and number of their wounded students and teachers. Doctors said a nine-year-old boy, identified only as Nafi, succumbed to his wounds overnight at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery (NIBPS) raising the toll to 32 in the crash. "He survived for two days sustaining 95 per cent burns and breathed his last shortly after midnight," NIBPS surgeon Shawon Bin Rahman told reporters. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Matthew Perry's doc expected to plead guilty

LOS ANGELES, 23 JULY

A doctor charged in connection with Matthew Perry's fatal overdose is expected to plead guilty on Wednesday. Dr Salvador Plasencia will admit to four counts of distributing ketamine, avoiding trial in August. In return, prosecutors will drop five other charges. Plasencia, who was not treating Perry at the time of his death, supplied him with ketamine vials, lozenges, and syringes weeks before his death in October 2023. He allegedly mocked the actor in messages and worked with another doctor to deliver the drugs. Perry's assistant found him dead at his LA home. The coroner confirmed ketamine toxicity as the cause. Only one accused, alleged dealer Jasveen Sangha, has yet to plead guilty. *—PTI*

LA driver who hit 37 charged with attempted murder

LOS ANGELES, 23 JULY

A man accused of deliberately driving into a crowd outside a Los Angeles nightclub has been charged with 37 counts of attempted murder and 37 counts of assault with a deadly weapon. Fernando Ramirez, 29, allegedly rammed his car into pedestrians leaving a reggae-hip hop event at the Vermont Hollywood venue early Saturday, injuring 37 people. Eight sustained serious injuries. The motive remains unknown. Ramirez fled the scene but was later found with a gunshot wound. Police are still searching for the shooter. He has a violent criminal history, including a 2019 hate crime-related assault and pending charges for drink-driving and domestic violence. Authorities said the incident could have resulted in mass casualties. *—PTI*

Trump reduces Japan tariffs from 20% to 15%

US to sell rice, cars to Japan; Trump calls it greatest deal

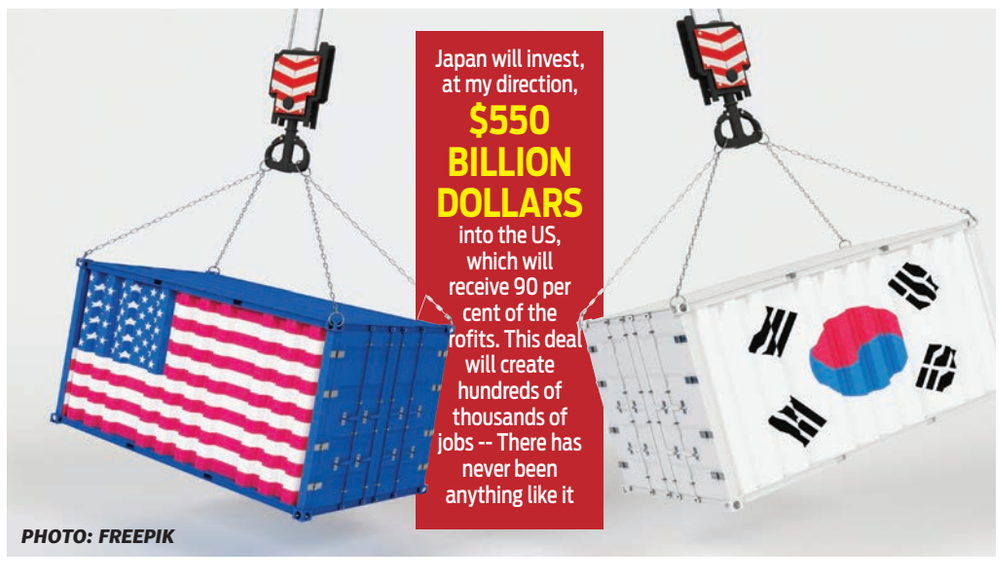

Japan will invest, at my direction, $550 BILLION DOLLARS into the US, which will receive 90 per cent of the profits. This deal will create hundreds of thousands of jobs -- There has never been anything like it

PHOTO: FREEPIK

WASHINGTON, 23 JULY

US President Donald Trump announced a trade framework with Japan on Tuesday, placing a 15 per cent tax on goods imported from Tokyo.

"We just completed a massive deal with Japan, perhaps the largest Deal ever made," Trump wrote on Truth Social. "Japan will invest, at my direction, $550 Billion Dollars into the US, which will receive 90 per cent of the profits. This deal will create hundreds of thousands of jobs -- There has never been anything like it."

Shortly after the announcement, CNN reported, Trump addressed a reception with Republican members of Congress in the East Room of the White House, saying, "I just signed the largest trade deal in history; I think maybe the largest deal in history with Japan. They had their top people here, and we worked on it long and hard. And it's a great deal for everybody."

The President said Japan would "open" its economy to American autos and rice. The 15 per cent tax on imported Japanese goods is a meaningful drop from the 25 per cent that Trump, in a recent letter to Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, said would be levied starting 1 August.

Trump also announced a trade framework with the Philippines following a White House meeting with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr that would impose a tariff of 19 per cent on its goods, down from 20 per cent, while American-made products would face no import taxes. The President also reaffirmed his 19 per cent tariffs on Indonesia.

Earlier, Trump announced that Vietnam's exports would face a 20 per cent tariff, with double that rate for goods transshipped from China, though there has been no formal announcement.

Meanwhile, a deal with China is under negotiation, with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent saying the 12 August deadline might be postponed again to allow more time for talks.

Trump also hinted at taking a trip to China. *—PTI/ANI*

Columbia Univ expels students who participated in protests

Columbia University announced disciplinary action Tuesday against students who participated in a pro-Palestinian demonstration inside the Ivy League school's main library before final exams in May and an encampment during alumni weekend last year. A student activist group said nearly 80 students were told they have been suspended for one to three years or expelled. The action comes as the Manhattan university is negotiating with Trump's administration to restore $400 million in federal funding it has withheld over the protests. *—PTI*

A student activist group said nearly 80 students were suspended **PHOTO: X**

Resignation only after studying US trade deal: Ishiba

TOKYO, 23 JULY

Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said he will make a decision on resigning over a historic defeat of his ruling party in a weekend election after closely studying the tariff deal.

Ishiba has been under growing pressure to step down as his ruling Liberal Democratic Party and its junior coalition partner, Komeito, lost their majority in the 248-member Upper House, the smaller and less powerful of Japan's two-chamber parliament on Sunday, shaking his grip on power and Japan's political stability.

The loss means Ishiba's ruling coalition, which also lost a majority in the more powerful Lower House in October, now lacks a majority in both Houses of Parliament.

Ishiba had announced his intention Monday to stay on to tackle pressing challenges, including tariff talks with the US, without creating a political vacuum, sparking calls from inside and outside his own party for a quick resignation to respond to the election results.

With the tariff deal with the US paving the way for his possible departure, Japanese media said he is expected to soon announce plans to step down in August. *—PTI*

2016 'POLL RIGGING'

Trump accuses Obama of treason

WASHINGTON, 23 JULY

"It's time to go after people," President Donald Trump said from the Oval Office as he accused former president Barack Obama of treason. His comments came after Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard released a report Friday which downplayed the extent of Russian interference in the 2016 Presidential elections, going against the grain of several previous reports.

Besides Obama, Trump on Tuesday listed people he accused of acting criminally "at the highest level," including former FBI director James Comey, his 2016 Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton and former National Intelligence director James Clapper. He accused Obama, without evidence, of being the "ringleader".

"He's guilty, it's not a question," Trump told reporters. "This was treason, this was every word you can think of."

Obama denied the "bizarre" allegations.

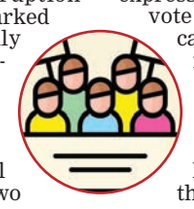
"These bizarre allegations are ridiculous and a weak attempt at distraction," Patrick Rodenbush, a spokesperson for Obama, said in a statement. "Nothing in the document undercuts the widely accepted conclusion that Russia worked to influence the 2016 Presidential election but did not successfully manipulate any votes. These findings were affirmed in a 2020 report by the bipartisan Senate Intelligence Committee, led by then-Chairman Marco Rubio". *—PTI/ANI*

> **Director of National Intelligence, Tulsi (Gabbard), she is like hotter than everybody. She is the hottest one in the room right now**
>
> —Donald Trump, US President

Kyiv erupts against bill affecting transparency

KYIV, 23 JULY

Thousands of people gathered in Kyiv and other cities across Ukraine on Tuesday to urge the president to veto a bill that threatens anti-corruption infrastructure. It marked the first major rally against the government in more than three years of war.



Ukraine's Parliament passed legislation that will tighten oversight of two key anti-corruption agencies, which critics say could significantly weaken their independence and give President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's circle greater sway over investigations.

Fighting entrenched corruption is crucial for Ukraine's bid to join the European Union and maintain access to billions of dollars in Western aid.

On X, the EU's Enlargement Commissioner Marta Kos expressed concern over the vote in the parliament, called the Rada, calling it "a serious step back. "Independent bodies like NABU & SAPO are essential for Ukraine's EU path. Rule of Law remains in the very center of EU accession negotiations."

The NABU and SAPO were formed in 2015 under Western guidance to promote prosecutorial independence, a requirement for Ukraine's EU accession talks and access to international loans. *—PTI&ANI*

Trump's aide tells Imran's sons 'you're not alone'

CALIFORNIA, 23 JULY

Richard Grenell, US President Donald Trump's envoy for special missions, on Tuesday (local time) met the sons of jailed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan in California and once again called for the former Pakistani Prime Minister's release, terming his arrest a case of "political prosecution".

Richard Grenell with Imran Khan's sons Sulaiman Isa and Kasim Khan **PHOTO: ANI**

Grenell posted a photo with Imran Khan's elder son Sulaiman Isa and his second son Kasim Khan on X, saying, "Welcome to California, my friends. I loved hanging out with you today. Sulaiman and @Kasim_Khan_1999, you must stay strong. There are millions of people around the world who are sick of political prosecutions. You are not alone."

Meanwhile, seven prominent PTI leaders were on Tuesday sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment in the 2023 riots cases. *—ANI & PTI*

F*** off Indian: Student attacked in Aus

ADELAIDE, 23 JULY

A 23-year-old Indian student, Charanpreet Singh, was brutally assaulted and left unconscious on a street in Adelaide after a group of men allegedly hurled racist abuse and attacked him over a car parking dispute. Singh was allegedly told "f*** off, Indian" before being punched repeatedly and left to die on the roadside, 9News reported.

The incident took place on Saturday night (local time) near Kintore Avenue in the heart of the city. Singh, who was in his car, said a group of men approached him, hurled racial slurs and launched a vicious physical attack without any provocation.

"They just said 'f*** off, Indian', and after that they just started punching," 9News quoted him as saying. "I tried to fight back, but they beat me until I was unconscious."

Charanpreet Singh **PHOTO: X**

He sustained severe injuries, including brain trauma and multiple facial fractures. He was rushed to the hospital, where he remained under medical care overnight.

- The incident took place on Saturday night near Kintore Avenue in the heart of the city. Singh said a group of men approached him, hurled racial slurs and attacked him without provocation

South Australia Police arrested a 20-year-old man from Enfield on Sunday and charged him with assault causing harm. However, the rest of the attackers fled the scene and are yet to be identified. *—ANI*

Indian man stripped, beaten in Dublin

DUBLIN, 23 JULY

An Indian man in his 40s was brutally assaulted and partially stripped by a group in Tallaght, Dublin, on Saturday. The victim, who had arrived in Ireland just three weeks ago, suffered serious injuries to his face, arms and legs. He was taken to Tallaght University Hospital for treatment. Gardaí (Irish police) confirmed they are investigating the incident, which occurred around 6pm on Parkhill Road, and are treating it as a possible hate crime.

Photographs circulating online show the man bleeding heavily. The Indian Ambassador to Ireland, Akhilesh Mishra, condemned the attack. *—Agencies*

BATS, BALLADS & BRILLIANCE

Ozzy Osbourne: The madman who made metal immortal

LOS ANGELES, 23 JULY

Ozzy Osbourne, the gloomy, demon-invoking lead singer of the pioneering band Black Sabbath who became the throaty, growling voice – and drug-and-alcohol ravaged id – of heavy metal, died Tuesday, just weeks after his farewell show with Sabbath.

"It is with more sadness than mere words can convey that we have to report that our beloved Ozzy Osbourne has passed away this morning. He was with his family and surrounded by love. We ask everyone to respect our family privacy at this time," a family statement said. In 2020, he revealed he had Parkinson's disease after suffering a fall.

Black Sabbath's 1969 self-titled debut LP has been likened to the Big Bang of heavy metal. It came during the height of the Vietnam War and crashed the hippie party and marked a shift in rock 'n' roll.

The band's second album, 'Paranoid,' included such classic metal tunes as 'War Pigs,' and 'Iron Man'. Both albums were voted among the top 10 greatest heavy metal albums of all time by readers of Rolling Stone magazine.

Osbourne embodied the excesses of metal. His outlandish exploits included relieving himself on the Alamo, snorting a line of ants off a sidewalk and, most memorably, biting the head off a live bat that a fan threw onstage during a 1981 concert. (He said he thought it was rubber). Osbourne also shot dead 17 of his cats during a dark days of drugs. *—PTI*

Ozzy Osbourne's death comes just weeks after his farewell show with Black Sabbath **PHOTO: X**

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Gold jumps by ₹1,000 to ₹1,01,020/10g

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

According to the All India Sarafa Association, gold of 99.9 per cent purity climbed Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,01,020 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). It had closed at Rs 1,00,020 per 10g in the previous market close. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity appreciated Rs 900 to Rs 1,00,450 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes) on Wednesday. In the previous trade, gold finished at Rs 99,550 per 10g. "Gold continues to be in demand as global uncertainty rises, largely due to diminishing expectations for a US-EU trade deal ahead of the 1 August deadline. Additionally, gold futures for August delivery slipped Rs 24 to Rs 1,00,305 per 10g on the commodities bourse. On the global front, spot gold fell 0.26 per cent to USD 3,422.87 per ounce. *—PTI*

Rupee falls by 3P, ends at 86.41 against USD

MUMBAI, 23 JULY

The rupee stayed weak for the sixth consecutive session and settled with a loss of 3 paise at 86.41 (provisional) against the dollar on Wednesday, amid a strong American currency and outflow of foreign funds. Forex traders said the domestic unit, however, found some cushion due to lower crude oil prices and heavy buying in domestic equity markets in line with global trends after the US announced a trade deal with Japan. At the interbank foreign exchange, the Indian currency opened weak at 86.46 and touched the intra-day peak of 86.34 against the greenback. The unit ended the session at 86.41 (provisional), registering a loss of 3 paise from its previous closing level. *—PTI*

ABREL posts ₹27 crore net loss in June

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

Aditya Birla Real Estate Ltd (ABREL) on Wednesday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 27.08 crore for the first quarter of this fiscal. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 17.35 crore in the year-ago period. Total income also declined to Rs 157.41 crore during the April-June period of FY26 from Rs 365.24 crore in the corresponding period of the preceding year, according to a regulatory filing. During the first quarter of 2025-26 fiscal, ABREL posted a net loss of Rs 47.30 crore from continued operations while it clocked a profit of Rs 20.22 crore from the discontinued operations. The ABREL, formerly known as Century Textiles & Industries Ltd, has recently sold its pulp and paper business. *—PTI*

Japanese automotive panel visits T'puram

T'PURAM, 23 JULY

Thiruvananthapuram, A high-level Japanese delegation from Toyota Motor Corporation and DSI Technologies visited Technopark to explore collaboration opportunities in automotive technology. Led by DSI Japan President Kanji Ueda, the team met Technopark CEO Col (Rtd) Sanjeev Nair and senior officials. The visitors, including executives from Toyota's Lexus division and Toyota Tsusho Systems Corporation, were briefed on Technopark's advanced tech ecosystem, which supports AI, robotics, machine learning, and blockchain innovations. Ueda praised the Park's scale and diversity, noting interest in potential collaborations in CAD applications. DSI Technologies, operating from Technopark for two decades, offers global engineering services across the automotive, aerospace, and heavy engineering sectors. Technopark hailed the visit as a step towards fruitful tech partnerships. *—PTI*

ED files FEMA case against Myntra for ₹1.6K cr breach

Myntra was doing multi-brand retail trade, violating norms

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday said it has registered a FEMA case against Flipkart-backed e-commerce platform Myntra, its linked companies and directors for alleged FDI contravention of over Rs 1,654 crore.

The federal probe agency said in a statement that the complaint was filed by its Bengaluru zonal office under Section 16(3) of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) acting on "credible information" that Myntra Designs Private Limited, whose brand name is Myntra, and its related companies are doing multi-brand retail trade in the guise of "wholesale cash and carry".

This is in alleged violation of extant Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) guidelines and provisions of the FEMA, the agency said in a statement.

A spokesperson of the Bengaluru-headquartered Myntra, a fashion and lifestyle e-commerce platform, said in a statement that the company is "deeply committed to upholding all applicable laws of the land and operating with the highest standards of compliance and integrity".

"While we have not received a copy of the subject complaint and the supporting documents from the authorities, we remain fully committed to cooperating with them at any point of time," the spokesperson said.

The company sold the majority of its goods to Vector E-Commerce Pvt Ltd, which sold the goods in retail to the ultimate customer, according to the agency.

According to the ED findings, Vector E-Commerce Pvt Ltd was "created and continued to be used" as a corporate entity to bifurcate the B2C transaction into B2B and then B2C.

- A spokesperson for Myntra, a fashion and lifestyle e-commerce platform, said in a statement that the company is "deeply committed to upholding all applicable laws of the land and operating with the highest standards of compliance and integrity"

At present, the country's FDI policy does not permit foreign direct investment in the inventory-based model of e-commerce.

Founded in 2007 and now part of the Flipkart Group, owned by Walmart, Myntra is stated to have over 70 million monthly active users and a catalogue of more than 3.9 million styles from over 9,700 brands. *—PTI*

SC junks pleas by KAL Airways, Maran against SpiceJet

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed a plea of KAL Airways and Kalanithi Maran seeking damages of over Rs 1,300 crore from SpiceJet in a long-standing share transfer dispute.

A bench of Justices PS Narasimha and AS Chandurkar upheld the Delhi High Court's order of 23 May dismissing their plea on grounds of delay.

KAL Airways and Kalanithi Maran had initially sought damages of over Rs 1,300 crore during the arbitration proceedings.

Maran and KAL Airways were former promoters of SpiceJet.

The high court had said the former promoter engaged in a "calculated gamble" by delaying the filing and re-filing of their appeals.

On 17 May, last year, a division bench of the high court set aside the single judge's order upholding an arbitral award directing SpiceJet and its promoter Ajay Singh to refund Rs 579 crore with interest to Maran.

The division bench allowed the appeals filed by Singh and SpiceJet against the 31 July, 2023 single judge order and remanded the matter to the court concerned to consider the matter of arbitral award afresh.

The case dates back to early 2015, when Singh, who owned the airline earlier, bought it back from Maran after it was grounded for months due to resource crunch. *—PTI*

Sensex jumps 540 points, Nifty touches 25.2K mark

MUMBAI, 23 JULY

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Benchmark Sensex jumped nearly 540 points while Nifty closed above the 25,200 level on Wednesday on heavy buying in banking giants and oil shares and a positive trend in Asian markets after Japan secured a trade deal with the US.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 539.83 points or 0.66 per cent to settle at 82,726.64. During the day, it surged 599.62 points or 0.72 per cent to 82,786.43.

The 50-share NSE Nifty gained 159 points or 0.63 per cent to settle at 25,219.90 as 37 of its constituents advanced and 13 declined.

Among Sensex firms, Tata Motors rose the most by 2.51 per cent. Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finance, Maruti, Bajaj Finserv, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries were also the major gainers.

Private banking giants HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank hit their 52-week high levels intra-day before settling nearly 1 per cent higher.

Value buying in Reliance Industries, following five days of losses, also supported the rally. RIL shares closed higher by 0.83 per cent.

However, Hindustan Unilever, UltraTech Cement, Bharat Electronics and ITC were among the laggards.

The BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.24 per cent and smallcap index went up by 0.05 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, telecommunication jumped 1.14 per cent, followed by auto (0.86 per cent), bankex (0.75 per cent), teck (0.74 per cent), financial services (0.70 per cent), healthcare (0.70 per cent) and energy (0.65 per cent).

Realty dropped 2.60 per cent, FMCG (0.46 per cent), capital goods (0.31 per cent) and services (0.20 per cent). *—PTI*

APP DEVELOPMENT

Google Play, Android fuel ₹4L cr revenue

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

Google Play and Android generated an estimated Rs 4 lakh crore in revenue for app publishers and the wider Indian economy in 2024, according to the latest report by economics, policy and opinion research consultancy Public First.

India's digital economy is one of the largest and fastest-growing in the world, experiencing unprecedented momentum fueled by rapid smartphone adoption, affordable data and a dynamic ecosystem of developers and entrepreneurs, the report said.

According to the report, India's digital revolution is transforming how millions of people participate in the modern economy.

Android is the world's most widely used mobile operating system, and is utilised by smartphones, tablets, laptop computers, and other smart technology produced by a range of companies, while Google Play is the official app store and digital distribution service for Android services.

"In 2024, the Play and Android ecosystem generated Rs 4 lakh crore in revenue for app publishers and the wider economy in India," it said.

Thirty-five lakh plus jobs were created by the app ecosystem Google Play and Android, it said. India represents the second largest number of active developers registered on Google Play, with over 10 lakh developer jobs. *—PTI*

FY26 growth forecast lowered to 6.3%: Ind-Ra

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) has revised its GDP growth forecast for India in FY26 to 6.3 per cent, down from its earlier estimate of 6.6 per cent made in December 2024. The downward revision reflects increased global uncertainty and a weaker-than-expected investment climate, the agency said in its mid-year economic outlook released on Wednesday.

Key headwinds include the unilateral tariff hikes by the United States, which have heightened global trade uncertainty, and a sluggish domestic investment environment. Many investors are reportedly in a "wait and watch" mode, particularly on greenfield expansion, due to the unpredictable global backdrop.

However, Ind-Ra noted several tailwinds: monetary easing, a faster decline in inflation, and the prospect of above-normal monsoon rainfall in 2025. *— PTI*

Altman warns banks of AI voice 'fraud crisis'

WASHINGTON, 23 JULY

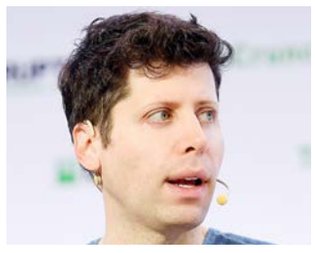


PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman has warned of an impending fraud crisis in the financial sector due to artificial intelligence's ability to clone human voices and bypass security checks. Speaking at a Federal Reserve conference in Washington on Tuesday, Altman said, "A thing that terrifies me is that some financial institutions still accept voiceprints as authentication. That is a crazy thing to still be doing. AI has fully defeated that."

Voice-based identification became popular over a decade ago, especially among wealthy clients who used spoken passphrases to access accounts. However, AI tools can now replicate voices – and soon even videos – in ways that Altman says are nearly "indistinguishable from reality", calling into question the future of such authentication methods.

Michelle Bowman, the Federal Reserve's Vice Chair for Supervision, acknowledged the risks and suggested collaboration between regulators and AI experts. Altman's warning highlights the urgent need for banks to move beyond voice-based verification to prevent AI-driven fraud. *—PTI*

- Voice-based identification became popular over a decade ago, especially among wealthy clients who used spoken passphrases to access accounts

NITES seeks action on TCS job delay of 600 people

BENGALURU, 23 JULY

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has confirmed that all candidates with offer letters will be onboarded, following media reports that over 600 professionals faced indefinite delays. The IT giant stated that joining dates are aligned with business needs and that it remains in regular contact with affected candidates.

The clarification comes after the Nascent Information Technology Employees Senate (NITES) wrote to Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on 22 July, highlighting the financial and mental strain on professionals left in limbo. Some candidates reportedly arrived on scheduled joining dates only to be told their onboarding was postponed without a timeline.

NITES has urged the government to ensure a time-bound commitment from TCS, request compensation, and explore alternative roles for affected hires. *—Agencies*

Coca-Cola's new soda to have cane sugar, on Trump's cue

WASHINGTON, 23 JULY

According to sources, Coca-Cola has confirmed the launch of a new version of its iconic soda after US President Donald Trump on social media posted that the company has agreed on using cane sugar in its drinks.

In the new drink, the company will be using sugar canes from US instead of its usual product sweetener, high fructose corn syrup, it said.

The company's response follows Trump's post in Truth Social on 16 July, that said, "I have been speaking to Coca-Cola about using REAL Cane Sugar in Coke in the United States, and they have agreed to do so." *—Agencies*

PHOTO: AI

GTRI: US–INDONESIA TACTICS COULD CAUSE RISKS FOR INDIA

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

The US-Indonesia trade pact reflects how Washington's pressure tactics can compel countries to cut tariffs, commit to large purchases, and loosen regulatory control, and India should tread cautiously in ongoing trade talks to avoid similar concessions, economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said on Wednesday.

Indonesia gave up far more than it gained, removing 99 per cent of its tariffs on US goods, agreeing to buy USD 22.7 billion in American products and weakening important rules that protected its industries, food safety and digital space, the GTRI said.

"India now faces similar US demands, including allowing remanufactured goods, opening up agriculture and dairy, accepting genetically modified (GM) feed, and adopting US rules on digital trade and product standards," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

He added that accepting American standards on cars, medical devices, or food, without any guarantee of reciprocity, would put India's consumers at risk. *—PTI*

'PAYPAL WORLD' LAUNCHED

Indians can now use PayPal for int'l payment

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

In a major boost to cross-border digital payments, Indian users will now be able to use the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) to make payments internationally through PayPal.

The global payments company "PayPal" has announced the launch of "PayPal World", a new platform that aims to connect the world's largest payment systems and digital wallets.

The platform will start by offering interoperability between PayPal and Venmo, and include UPI as part of its initial launch.

This means Indian consumers can now shop from international merchants and pay using the UPI option they are already familiar with.

For example, an Indian user browsing an online store in the United States to buy a pair of sneakers will now see a UPI button after clicking the PayPal option at checkout. This allows them to complete the transaction using their UPI account, just as they would for any domestic payment.

- The platform will start by offering interoperability between PayPal and Venmo, and include UPI as part of its initial launch. This means Indian consumers can now shop from international merchants

Ritesh Shukla, Managing Director and CEO of NPCI International Payments Limited, said, "The integration of UPI on PayPal World's platform will mark a significant step in expanding UPI's global footprint. It aligns with our vision to make cross-border payments more seamless, secure, and inclusive. This collaboration will enhance convenience for Indian users making payments abroad and enable global businesses and merchants to tap into a growing base of UPI users."

The company stated that collaboration includes global partners representing nearly two billion users worldwide. The platform also benefits users from other countries.

For instance, a PayPal user travelling to China can make payments at a cafe that accepts Weixin Pay simply by scanning the code using their PayPal app.

This step marks a new beginning for global digital payments, especially for Indian users who rely heavily on UPI for everyday transactions. With PayPal World, sending money or shopping across borders will be easier than ever. *—ANI*

Minda, Qualcomm unite for auto cockpit solutions

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

Auto components maker Minda Corporation on Wednesday said it has tied up with Qualcomm Technologies, Inc to develop advanced cockpit solutions for the Indian automotive market.

As part of the collaboration, Minda is designing a next-generation cockpit platform powered by the Snapdragon Cockpit Platform from Qualcomm Technologies.

The Snapdragon Cockpit Platform enhances in-car experiences by delivering sophisticated displays, audio, computing and connectivity, making them more responsive, Minda Corporation said in a statement.

"By leveraging Qualcomm's advanced automotive platforms, this strategic partnership enables us to offer intuitive HMI, seamless multi-display integration and software-defined cockpit architectures built on Android and QNX operating systems," Minda Corporation Group CTO Suresh D said.

The company aims to redefine the in-vehicle experience for Indian consumers, bringing innovation and connectivity to the next generation of vehicles, said Savi Soin, Senior Vice President, India President, Qualcomm Technologies.

Minda shares were trading 0.41 per cent down at Rs 515.70 apiece on BSE. – *PTI*

Sindhu downs Miyazaki, Satwik-Chirag advance at China Open

P V Sindhu overcame sixth seed Tomoka Miyazaki PHOTO: PTI

CHANGZHOU, 23 JULY

Double Olympic medallist and former world champion P V Sindhu overcame sixth seed Tomoka Miyazaki of Japan 21-15, 8-21, 21-17 to reach the round of 16 at the China Open Super 1000 event on Wednesday.

Sindhu started strongly, reeling off seven consecutive points to lead 13-5 in the opening game before sealing it comfortably.

In the second game, Miyazaki fought back brilliantly, taking nine points in a row to lead 12-8 before restoring parity.

Sindhu regained control in the decider, maintaining a steady lead to close out the contest and secure a hard-fought win in 62 minutes.

Currently ranked 15th in the world, Sindhu was facing the 18-year-old world No. 6 Miyazaki for the second time, having lost to the Japanese youngster at the Swiss Open last year.

Last week, Sindhu had suffered a first-round exit at the Super 750 Japan Open, losing 15-21, 14-21 to Korea's Sim Yu Jin her fifth first-round defeat this year.

The Indian ace is hoping to bounce back from a string of early exits this season, which includes first or second-round losses at the Indonesia Open, Singapore Open, Malaysia Masters, Asian Championships, Swiss Open, All England Open, and Indonesia Masters.

Meanwhile, the world No. 15 men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty made a strong start, defeating Japan's Kenya Mitsuhashi and Hiroki Okamura 21-13, 21-9 in just 31 minutes.

The Indian duo combined well to keep their opponents under constant pressure, winning the first game comfortably before wrapping up the second even more emphatically.

The former world No. 1 pair will be looking to break their semi-final jinx this season, having reached the last four at the Malaysia Open, India Open, and Singapore Open.

However, it was disappointment for the women's doubles team of Rutaparna Panda and Swetaparna Panda, who lost to Hong Kong's Nga Ting Yeung Yeung and Pui Lam Yeung 12-21, 13-21 in 31 minutes. —*PTI*

Late birdies help Neha take one-shot lead

KOLAR, 23 JULY

Two sets of back-to-back birdies and another late birdie saw a resurgent Neha Tripathi take a one-shot lead in the 10th Leg of the Women's Pro Golf Tour at the Zion Hills Golf Course on Wednesday. Neha, who was the runner-up last week in the ninth leg, had five birdies against two bogeys in a round of 3-under 69, which gave her a one-shot lead over Durga Nittur (70). The only other player other than Neha and Durga to get a score of par or better was Ridhima Dilawari, who shot even par 72 and which included two birdies in the last four holes in the first round. Neha, who is just getting back to form after being ridden with injuries over the past year, had back-to-back birdies on the second and the third, and parred the other six holes on the front nine. —*PTI*

England strike thrice to negate India's advantage

Rahul becomes 2nd India batter to equal Gavaskar's record

India's KL Rahul and Yashasvi Jaiswal run between the wickets on day one of the fourth test cricket match between India and England, at the Old Trafford Cricket Ground, in Manchester on Wednesday PHOTO: PTI

MANCHESTER, 23 JULY

England removed a well-set opening duo of KL Rahul and Yashasvi Jaiswal before sending back Shubman Gill to leave India at 149 for three at tea on day one of the fourth Test here on Wednesday.

Sai Sudharsan and Rishabh Pant are at crease.

Having failed to land a wicket in the morning session, England broke through shortly after lunch with Chris Woakes finally getting rewarded for relentlessly bowling in the off-stump channel.

He had Rahul (46 off 98) caught at third slip with a ball that seamed away from length.

The second wicket of the session came via left-arm spinner Liam Dawson, who took seven balls to strike in his first Test in eight years.

Jaiswal (58 off 107) played for the spin, but the ball did not turn that much, taking a thick outside edge on its way to the first slip. KL Rahul becomes 2nd Indian opener after Sunil Gavaskar to script historic record #INDvsENG. 1000 and Counting: KL Rahul becomes 2nd Indian Opener after Sunil Gavaskar to script History.

There was a clear ploy from England to deliberately drag one down the leg side when Sudharsan was batting, following his soft dismissal at Leeds. Ben Stokes almost similarly had Sudharsan, but Jamie Smith spilled a regulation catch down the leg to offer a lifeline to the Indian batter who was on 20 at the time. India captain Gill (12) did not last long as he misjudged an incoming ball from Stokes. He offered no shot, and got trapped in front.

In the morning session, Jaiswal survived a probing spell from Woakes while Rahul looked solid as ever to steer India to 78 for no loss at lunch. England wicketkeeper Jamie Smith made a massive blunder on the third ball of the 48th over that was bowled by Ben Stokes. Sai Sudharsan got an edge on the Stokes delivery, but Smith dropped the easy chance on the leg side. —*PTI*

Farokh, Lloyd honoured

Former India wicketkeeper Farokh Engineer and legendary West Indies captain Clive Lloyd were on Wednesday honoured by the Lancashire County Cricket Club with stands named after them at the Old Trafford Stadium here, on the opening day of the fourth Test between India and England. Engineer, who represented Lancashire from 1968 to 1976, played 175 matches, amassing 5,942 runs, 429 catches, and 35 stumpings. His arrival marked a turning point for the club, helping them win the Gillette Cup four times between 1970 and 1975 after a 15-year title drought. Despite his deep ties to Indian cricket, including the memorable outings he had at Mumbai's Brabourne Stadium, Engineer surprisingly does not have a stand named after him there.

CLINCH SERIES 2-1

Harmanpreet Kaur's heroic century and Kranti Goud's exceptional 6-for take India to a historic ODI series win against England PHOTO: PTI

Harmanpreet's ton powers Indian women to win over England

CHESTER-LE-STREET, 23 JULY

Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur once again displayed a penchant for saving her best for crunch games as India rode on her majestic century to win the high-scoring third women's ODI by 13 runs and clinch the series 2-1.

A splendid 84-ball 102 from skipper Harmanpreet and a brisk fifty from Jemimah Rodrigues fired India Women to a challenging 318 for five, before the bowlers did just enough to bowl out England for 305 in 49.5 overs here on Tuesday.

The win capped off a memorable tour for India Women, who also won the five-match T20I series 3-2.

The 36-year-old Indian skipper didn't score too many in the first two games, but when it mattered most, she oozed class en route to her seventh ton in the fifty-over format.

The match was also special as she completed 4000 runs in WODIs in her 149th game.

The knock gave India their second highest ODI score against England, but at no stage was their highest score of 333/5 against these opponents, recorded in September 2022 in Canterbury, under threat.

Harmanpreet had scored a century in that game too.

The India skipper played spectacular strokes, particularly on the off-side, which she peppered with most of her 14 boundaries. A few of them came down the ground, and one was hit behind the wicket.

Harmanpreet also stitched vital stands along the way, putting on 81 runs for the third wicket with Harleen Deol (45) to set the platform while her 110-run stand off only 77 balls with Rodrigues gave India the push for a total over 300.

India 318 for 5 (Harmanpreet 102, Rodrigues 50) beat England 305 (Sciver-Brunt 98, Lamb 68, Goud 6-52) by 13 runs —*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@PRANAVI_URS

Indian golfer Pranavi back from injury

AYRSHIRE, 23 JULY

After recovering from an injury sustained in May, Indian golfer Pranavi Urs returns to action at the USD 2 million ISPS Handa Women's Scottish Open beginning at the Dundonald Links here on Thursday. Other Indians in the field are the in-form Diksha Dagar and Tvesa Malik. Rookie Avani Prashanth and Hitaashee Bakshi failed to make the field.Pranavi, who won the Hero Women's Order of Merit in India in 2022 with five victories in a single season, has been a regular on the Ladies European Tour, where she was the top Indian in 2024. This season, after some good finishes in Top-15 at the Ford NSW Open in Australia and Investec SA Women's Open, she played and cut a Aramco Korea, but hurt her wrist.—*PTI*

Mahreen, Arshvant lead Indian challenge

PINEHURST, 23 JULY

Two of India's most decorated teenage golfers, Mahreen Bhatia and Arshvant Srivastava, will lead the Indian challenge at this week's US Kids World Teen Championship at the iconic Pinehurst, North Carolina. The US Kids India team has six players in this year's edition of the annual World Teens event. There are two players in the Boys 15-18 and four in Girls 15-18, and all have good experience in and out of India. Mahreen was third at the 2024 edition and runner-up in 2023 and is aiming to get to the top.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@LEOMESSI

Lionel Messi to quit MLS for return to Europe?

DUBAI, 23 JULY

With an eye on FIFA World Cup 2026, Lionel Messi has been linked with a return to Europe in order to boost his preparations for the quadrennial event. Messi inspired Argentina to the FIFA World Cup title three years ago, but there were doubts whether he would be around as an active player to defend the title in 2026. However, with Messi still looking in great shape, and still an integral part of the Argentina team, many wonder if a return to Europe, with a better club could help the Inter Miami man., Messi was even spotted at his former Barcelona teammate Cesc Fabregas' house a few days ago, triggering rumours of a potential European return.—*PTI*

Anti-Doping Amendment Bill tabled in LS by Mandaviya

NEW DELHI, 23 JULY

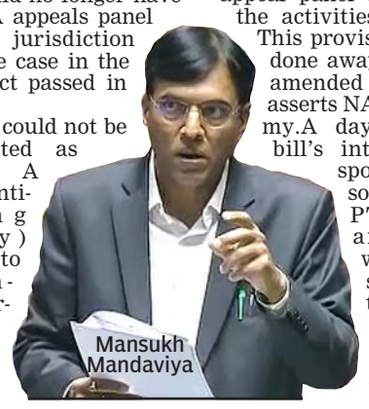
Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Wednesday tabled the National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha, providing greater "operational independence" to the country's Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) as prescribed by WADA.

The contentious National Board for Anti-Doping in Sports has been retained, but it would no longer have the NADA appeals panel under its jurisdiction as was the case in the original act passed in 2022.

That act could not be implemented as WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) objected to "government interference" in the NADA's functioning.

"The National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Bill, 2025, seeks to enhance institutional and operational independence of the National Anti-Doping Appeal Panel and the National Anti-Doping Agency to ensure autonomy in their decisions about operations, investigations and enforcement activities," stated the bill's objectives.

The Board was previously empowered to constitute the appeal panel and "oversee the activities" of NADA. This provision has been done away with in the amended bill, which asserts NADA's autonomy.A day before the bill's introduction, a sports ministry source had told PTI that amendments were necessary to ensure that India does not end up being suspended by WADA.—*PTI*



World 6-Red Snooker C'ships: Mehta does a Houdini act

MANAMA, 23 JULY

Down and out for the count against Pakistan's Ahsan Ramzan, second-seeded Aditya Mehta staged a Houdini act to keep his title hopes alive at the IBSF World 6-Red Snooker Championships here on Wednesday.

The seasoned campaigner, down 2-3 in the best-of-seven frame pre-quarters, kept his rival at bay with solid safety play to draw level at 3-3 and then made a splendid 71 clearance for a brilliant come-from-behind victory. The 4-3 verdict helped Mehta, a former World Games gold medallist, set up a quarterfinal meeting against fellow Indian Manan Chandra, who thwarted a spirited challenge from Qatar's Ahmed Saif. —*PTI*

DC OPEN

Emma Raducanu defeats Marta, will face Naomi Osaka next

WASHINGTON, 23 JULY

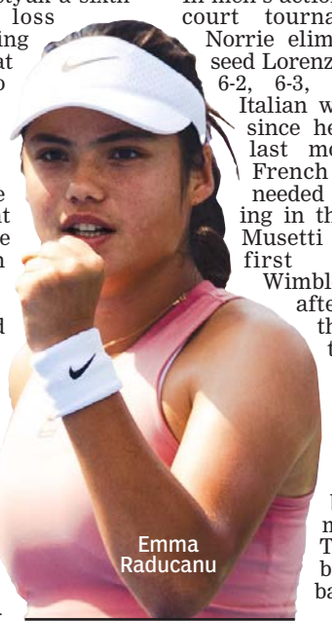
Emma Raducanu handed No. 7 seed Marta Kostyuk a sixth consecutive loss Tuesday, defeating her 7-6 (4), 6-4 at the DC Open to prolong a slide that now has lasted more than two months.

This was the fifth tournament in a row where Kostyuk exited in the first round; she also lost in the fourth round at Rome, starting the current rut. She hasn't won a match since 11 May in Rome.

The 46th-ranked Raducanu, who won the 2021 U.S. Open, will face four-time major champion Naomi Osaka next. Osaka was a 6-2, 7-5 winner against Yulia Putintseva.

In men's action at the hard-court tournament, Cam Norrie eliminated No. 2 seed Lorenzo Musetti 3-6, 6-2, 6-3, keeping the Italian without a win since he got injured last month at the French Open and needed to quit playing in the semifinals. Musetti lost in the first round at Wimbledon, a year after reaching the semifinals there.

Holger Rune, who was seeded third in Washington, withdrew before his match Tuesday because of a back injury. —*PTI*



Venus becomes oldest player to win singles match

Venus Williams wanted to send a message to herself and others about coming back from a long layoff, about competing in a sport at age 45, about never giving up. Yes, there was something special about just being back on a tennis court Tuesday night.And Williams did just that, becoming the second-oldest woman to win a tour-level singles match in professional tennis

OLYMPIC WOMEN'S SPORTS

US officials bar transgender women from Games

COLORADO SPRINGS, 23 JULY

The U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee has effectively barred transgender women from competing in women's sports, telling the federations overseeing swimming, athletics, and other sports it has an "obligation to comply" with an executive order issued by President Donald Trump.

The new policy, announced with a quiet change on the USOPC's website and confirmed in a letter sent to national sport governing bodies, follows a similar step taken by the NCAA earlier this year.The USOPC change is noted obliquely as a detail under "USOPC Athlete Safety Policy" and references Trump's executive order, "Keeping Men Out of Women's Sports," signed in February. That order, among other things, threatens to "rescind all funds" from organizations that allow transgender athlete participation in women's sports. U.S. Olympic officials told the national governing bodies they will need to follow suit, adding that "the USOPC has engaged in a series of respectful and constructive conversations with federal officials" since Trump signed the order.

"As a federally chartered organization, we must comply with federal expectations," USOPC CEO Sarah Hirshland and President Gene Sykes wrote in a letter. —*PTI*

The medals for the 2026 Winter Olympics were revealed during a ceremony in Venice PHOTO: X/@OLYMPIC

England fight back to down Italy to reach Euro 2025 final

GENEVA, 23 JULY

Italy captain Cristiana Girelli and defender Lucia Di Guglielmo cried as they walked around the field after an emotional semifinal loss, 2-1 after extra time to England on Tuesday, each with one arm around the other's waist.

They waved goodbye to fans and their shared Women's European Championship title hopes inside Stade de Genève, which had been a joyous second home for them in Switzerland. Less than an hour earlier, Italy had been little more than one minute away from advancing to a final few had imagined.

"I feel that something has ended that we didn't want to end, because I still don't believe it's over," the 35-year-old Girelli said, in tears again in the player interview area. "Probably fate has been a little cruel to us." Goalkeeper Laura Guilani had been alone with her emotions after fulltime, face down on the turf in midfield. Then, just as a penalty shootout loomed, England clinched the victory with Chloe Kelly's goal in the 119th minute to send the defending champion to Sunday's final. —*PTI*